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MAY/JUNE 1993 ISSUE #41
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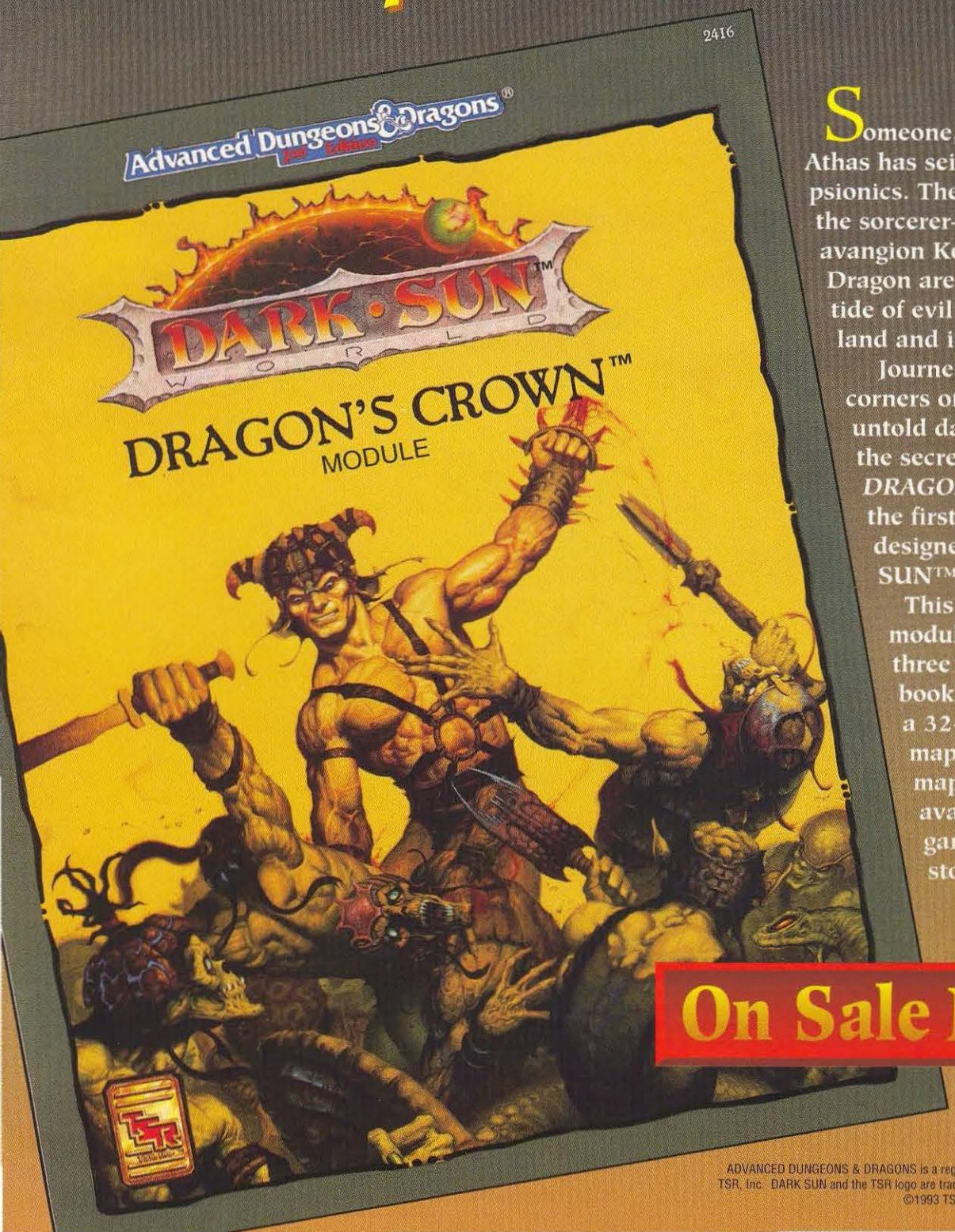

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Dungeon®

'ENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYIN

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COVER: We loved Terry Dykstra's black-and-white illustrations so much that we asked him to do a color cover featuring "Old Man Katan" and his fungoid companions. In this case, we're not sure what (or who) is being served for lunch.

It's Never Too Late to Say . . .

. . . "Thank you!" to all the readers who responded to our survey in issue #37. We appreciate your taking the time to let us know what you like (and don't like) about DUNGEON Adventures. Many of you added written comments, and even long letters, to your surveys. Wolf and I read all of these and feel we have a better idea of who you are and what you want.

. . . "Thank you!" to Chris Holder, who single-handedly input all the data from the surveys so that we could analyze and quantify your responses.

. . . "Thank you!" to Anne Brown, TSR's resident expert on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® campaign setting, for hours spent reviewing the adventure "Hopeful Dawn" that appears in this issue.

. . . "Thank you!" to Christopher Perkins, James Brett, Robert Head, and Paul Lynds who playtested material for issue #40 (we ran out of space to thank them there). Christopher, James, Robert, and Paul also playtested material for the current issue.

We've revised our Writers' Guidelines, streamlining some areas and adding new material on playtesting and on "electronic" proposals. If you're interested in writing modules for DUNGEON Adventures, be sure to send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for our new guidelines. If you subscribe to the GEnie Information Service, the new guidelines should be available online shortly. You can also communicate with us via the TSR Roundtable, category 33, topic 1.

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

Barbara G. Young

The Readers — **LETTERS** 6

The Readers — **PLEASING ALL OF THE PEOPLE, SOME OF THE TIME**
The survey results, finally! 8

Coby Hedberg — **DEADLY TREASURE**
(AD&D® adventure, level 10+) No treasures here just lying around to be taken. This tomb's riches fight back! 10

Roger Baker — **THE WELL OF LORD BARCUS**
(AD&D SideTrek adventure, levels 2-5) Don't be greedy. Give 'til it hurts. 26

Teeuwynn Woodruff & Tim Beach — **A WAY WITH WORDS**
(D&D® game adventure, levels 1-3) I hope that I will never see/A kobold spouting poetry. 28

Lawrence Kapture — **MAMMOTH PROBLEMS**
(AD&D game SPELLJAMMER® adventure, levels 8-10) The elves thought they'd destroyed it forever, but this problem's too big to go away. 36

Gary Lai — **HOPEFUL DAWN**
(AD&D game adventure, levels 3-6) The prophecy is fulfilled. A new age is at hand . . . if you can survive this one night. 46

Ted James Thomas Zuvich — **OLD MAN KATAN AND THE MUSHROOM BAND**
(AD&D game adventure, levels 1-6) It's about swamps and mushrooms and a lost cat. That's all we can say. 58

He that high growth on cedars did bestow,
Gave also lowly mushrumps leave to grow.
Robert Southwell, "Scorn Not the Least"

Vol. VII, No. 5

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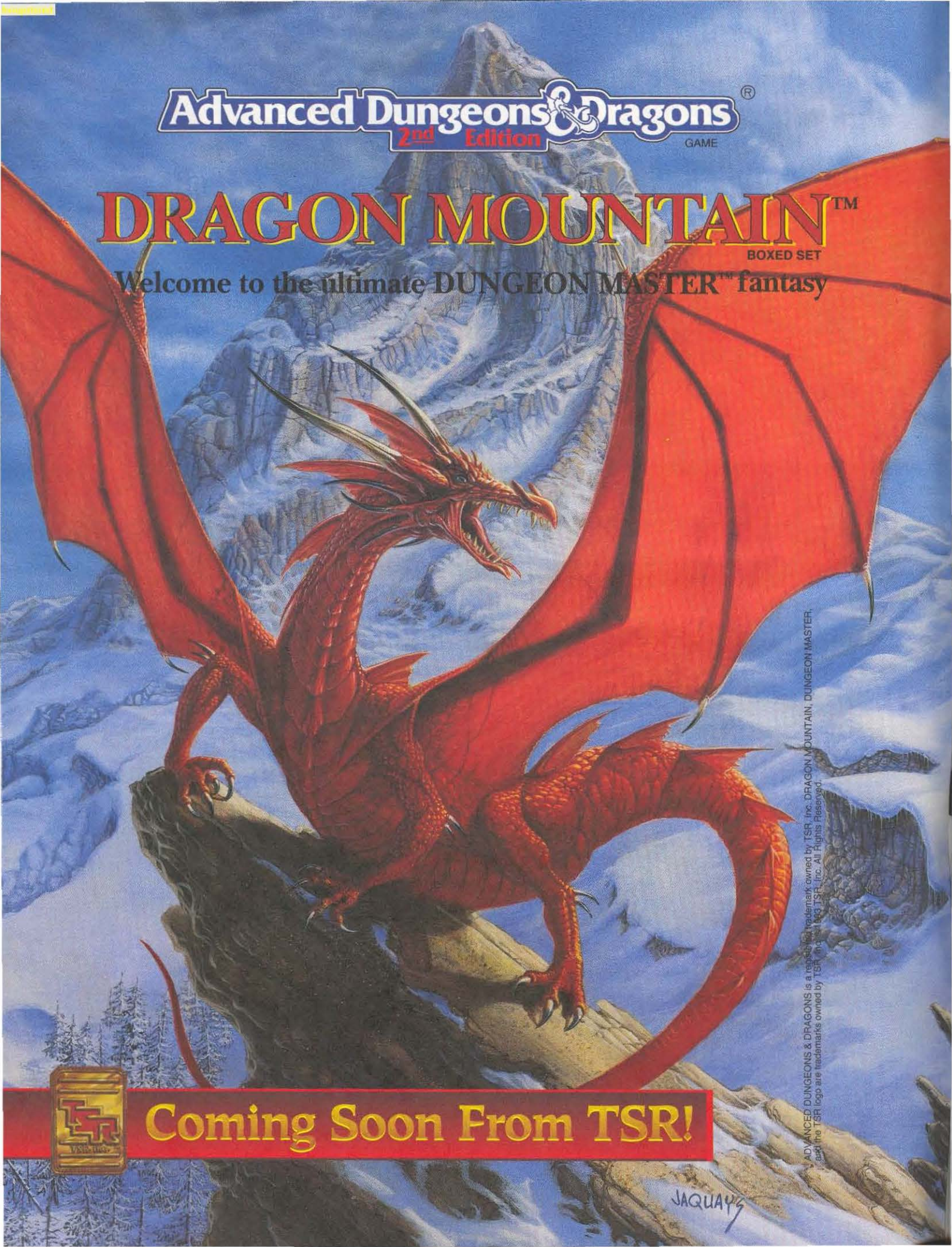

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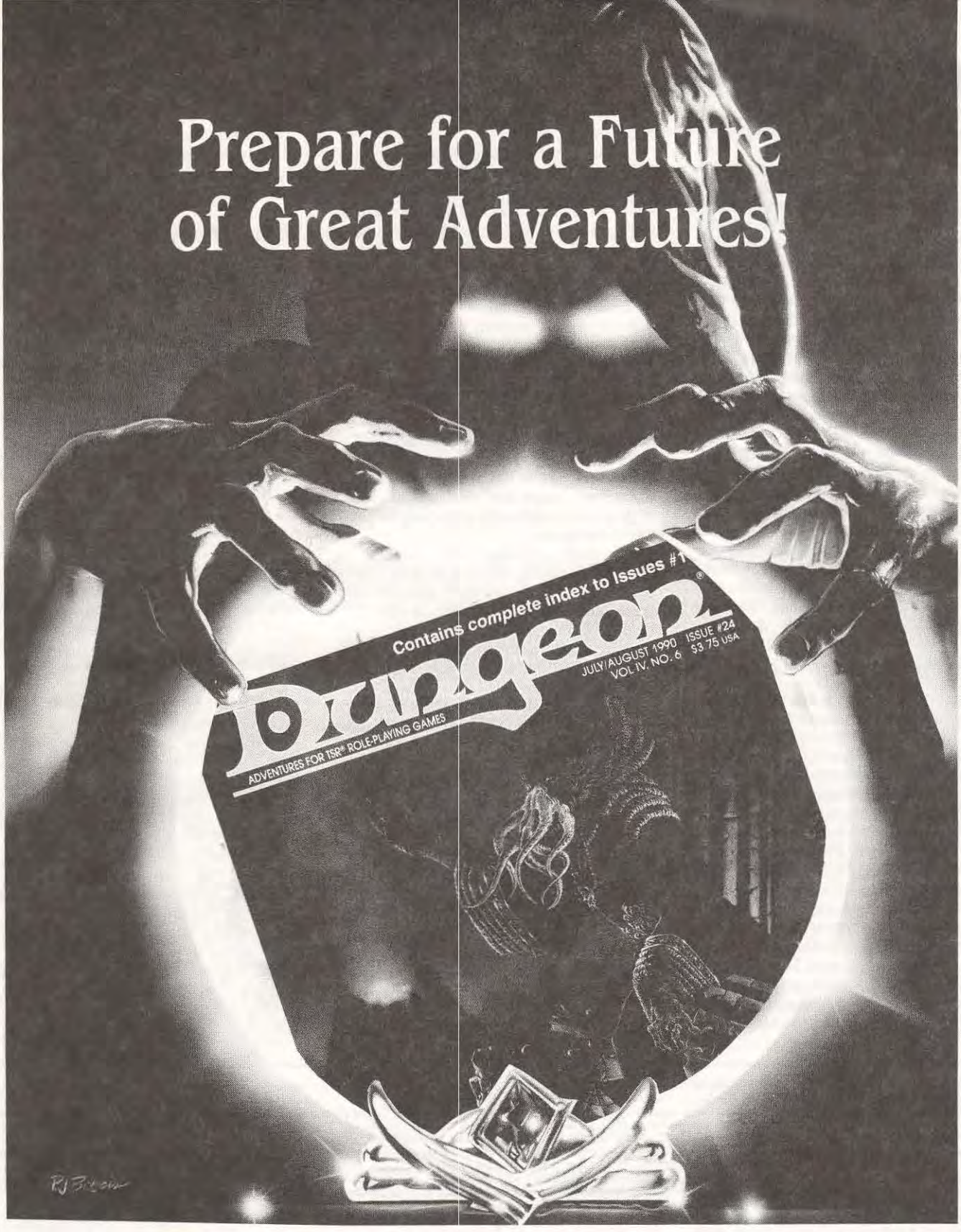
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LETTERS

G'Day Mate

After a year spent cycling around the Australian continent, deprived of a gaming outlet, it was with delight that I once again picked up a friend's DUNGEON® Magazine, issue #35. If anything, the standard has improved.

One adventure in particular caught my eye: "The Ghost of Mistmoor." The intricacies of the haunt, which guide the PCs to the ultimate climax while maintaining player autonomy, are delicately and imaginatively constructed. Poor Broc, the mute, having spent the adventure hunched beneath the shallow floor, was slain by a halfling.

I was disturbed to find in the GEN CON® game fair liftout only enthralled males and a Wookiee. [*I think that's a werewolf. BGY*] Where are the women? The back page did show a bronzed, curved Valkyrie mounted upon a metallic dragon. I'd swap my bicycle for that dragon any day.

Mortimer the Traveller
Melbourne, Australia

Crawling Around the Plot

In the twelve years I have been role-playing in a DM capacity, I have seen many changes, for better or worse, in the AD&D® game. Most adventure modules released today hold fast to a set plot or story line that carries the players through the encounters to a predetermined climax (*Vecna Lives, Night of the Walking Dead, Thoughts of Darkness,* and all DARK SUN™ setting material). The presence of a booklike plot contrasts greatly with earlier modules like *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh, The Steading of the Hill Giant Chief, Shrine of the Kuo-toa,* and *The Ghost Tower of Inverness,* which provided detailed settings filled with statistics of inhabitants to fight, but virtually no story line at all.

Following the modern trend, DUNGEON Magazine offers plot-intensive adventures rather than the older, more descriptive adventures, going so far as to specifically request them in the writer's guidelines. This makes those DMs whose strong suit is developing their own story feel like they must succumb to another person's creations.

Some of your readers want adventures that they can easily integrate into their own campaign worlds. But there is so much plot in DUNGEON adventures that to use them would mean gutting the story and keeping only the maps and encounters. This is a big hassle. I have to change names while reading boxed text on the fly, and I have to keep characters, maps and events consistent with what has already been established in my campaign.

This leads me to my point. Simply attempt to satisfy those of us who want a detailed map or two with encounters, traps, and tables—and nothing else. Give us a dungeon or locale with descriptions and encounters similar to adventure modules of a decade ago. I would greatly appreciate a swamp lair of gnolls and flinds, or an old shack over a mine populated with gelatinous cubes and giant ticks, either of which I could simply plug and chug.

I feel that the AD&D game is moving away from maps and toward plots and stories because of TSR's success with novels and coinciding modules. I'm not advocating completely plotless adventures, nor am I trying to demean strong story lines. I just feel that there is an overabundance of them, and that to keep the older gamers interested in the AD&D game, you must pay homage to what we grew up on and what your magazine was named after: dungeons.

Adam C. Chunn
Austin, Texas

Perhaps "Deadly Treasure" in this issue is the sort of thing you're looking for. You might also enjoy "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" in issue #37.

The DM's Responsibility

I'd like to address an issue that has bothered me for some time. In issue #7, Tim "Zorath" Innes wrote to you requesting an evil character campaign. I congratulate you on your diplomatic answer, which was basically "No." In a later issue, someone wrote to you explaining how he gave in to his players' requests and let them play evil characters in an evil world. After the chaos that resulted, they never wanted to play evil characters again. I bow respectfully to his solution.

I myself refuse players who wish to play such characters. I often game with young players whose parents would be alarmed to learn that their children were playing evil characters. Even the older players have parents and friends that would find such a concept disturbing. The AD&D game has had enough bad publicity in the past from groups claiming it is evil without our own players reinforcing their claims.

One experience I had involved a 13-year-old player. He went home after his first gaming session and told his parents that he had fun slaying monsters and picking the pockets of townsfolk. Naturally, they called me and told me, none too politely, what they thought of my influence over their son. So I did what any good DM would do. I invited them to a session. After that session, his mother was much relieved. She said it looked like fun. His father enjoyed the session and wanted to learn more about the game, but business held him back from playing. Over the next few months, the mother noticed that her son's reading and math skills had improved.

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A good DM has a responsibility, especially to young, impressionable players. That responsibility is to help their imaginations grow and to provide fun for them. A good DM does not delight in frustrating his players and teaching them to think in twisted ways. If you are a DM, you teach ideals and skills that help develop ways to gather and process information and seek inventive solutions to problems. Encourage your players to think and grow. Have fun, and your players may turn to the game to feel good about themselves instead of turning to drugs or alcohol that will only make things worse as life goes on.

Alex Vazquez
Clermont, Florida

Down With Psionics

This letter is in response to Kenneth Smith's letter in issue #40. As an experienced DM (eight years), I know the price an adventure pays when the characters have more power than their will can control. Psionics are *too* powerful.

I purchased *The Complete Psionics Handbook* before my gaming group began a long, hard adventure. We all read the handbook, and I decided to allow one of them to play a psionic character. The adventure they played wasn't a hack-and-slay type; it was one for characters with wit. The other five 14th- to 16th-level characters were far weaker than the psionic character, who could kill them all (and they knew it). During the adventure, I thought it insane that, when an evil NPC tried to outwit or beguile the PCs, the psionic character could simply read his mind and figure everything out. That is not using your brain, it's using your dice. At that time, I was quite upset. I found that the other players were angry also, and they said that if the psionic character stayed, they would quit. The only one having fun was the player of the psionic character, and that is not the way to play the AD&D game.

Psionics are fine in the DARK SUN setting only, where the idea of having psionic abilities is much better justified. There, everyone has psionics, and everyone is happy. The standard AD&D world is for wizards and warriors, not psionics.

The remainder of this letter has nothing to do with psionics. It is my response to Michael Satran's letter, also in issue #40. I can't agree with Michael more. An NPC cares as much about his life and his magical items as the player characters do about theirs. A villain can't be unbeatable; if he were, the PCs would be bored as hell. The villain should almost always have some sort of flaw that can be exploited to make him beatable. Such a flaw need not be so powerful or obvious as garlic against a vampire, but perhaps something like a childhood fear or a longtime hatred. Always remember that every NPC is as much an individual personality as every PC. Never dismiss an 18 Intelligence as spell books and memory. Never dismiss a 12 Intelligence as a fool!

Consider this: There is no such thing as *a* lich. Each one has an individual past, its own fears and weaknesses, its own tactics and insights. Don't be fooled by something in print like: **Drow fighters** (10): HD 15 (from *Thoughts of Darkness*, one of TSR's RAVENLOFT® adventures). Fifteenth level is above the elven limit, so such a warrior would be quite rare, if not unique.

As advice to future writers of adventures, for your players or for publication: Remember personality.

Todd Meyrath
Athens, Georgia

For more debate on psionics, see the "Forum" section of DRAGON Magazine, issue #191. Also see page 8 of this issue to find out how psionics fared in our readership survey.

Elves can exceed their racial limit using the optional rule on page 15 of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Linking DUNGEON® Modules

The challenge made by Wolfgang Baur and the comments of Scott C. Nolan in issue #39 have prompted me to write to you. I have just completed running a series of nine adventures that I lined together from the pages of DUNGEON Magazine. Five of them were stand-alone modules or SideTreks that were sprinkled in to add variety and permit the PCs to attain the levels necessary to successfully attempt the later adventures.

The series began with an adventure of my own that resulted in the mayor of their hometown being very grateful to the PCs. He passed on a message that the seaman's guild needed some help in a nearby city. On the trip of about 150 miles, the PCs encountered the "Alicorn" (issue #33), "A Local Legend" (issue #31), and "Through the Night" (issue #29).

On arrival, they were sent to an island that had been a pirate base, and that was causing problems in the most direct path to the spice islands: "Isle of the Abbey" (issue #34). Among the treasures they gained by clearing the island of undead, the PCs discovered an ornate box containing a signet ring and an expensive pendant. The seaman's guild go-between, Major Ursa, told them that it had belonged to an outstanding military officer named Tarran Kratys, who had retired from the army about 10 years ago and moved far to the north. Ursa felt sure that the fair-minded Kratys would reward the PCs for returning his property.

The PCs set off north. Since the mission wasn't urgent, they became involved in "The Standing Stones of Sundown" (issue #25) and "The Ghost of Mistmoor" (issue #35) en route. Upon arriving at Tarran Kratys's home and receiving their reward, they were immediately embroiled in "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (issue #33).

At this stage, the PCs were far north of their hometown and had some unfinished business there from the original scenario. The trip home was made more lucrative by a commission to deliver the taxes owed by a wealthy merchant: "Courier Service" (issue #27).

After completing this task and tying up the loose ends, one of the PCs was visited in a dream by the ghost of Rebecca Mistmoor. She warned that Erebus (whom the PCs had vanquished in the earlier adventure) was intent on revenge against the PCs. Recent events in the village of Silver Rise allowed Erebus (now resident on the plane of Shadow) to flood the world with shadows in the hope of locating and killing the PCs. Therefore, the PCs hotfooted it to Silver Rise and were embroiled in "Beyond the Glittering Veil" (issue #31).

This series of adventures provided the players in my group with a variety of scenarios, each with a different feel, that no single DM could possibly supply. This way of creating a simple campaign is fairly straightforward. One, select all the adventures you wish to use. Two, decide on an overall goal, a task the PCs are to attempt to fulfill. Three, in

Continued on page 9

Pleasing All of the People, Some of the Time

or

The Envelope, Please.

The complete survey results from issue #37 are in, and over 1,200 of you responded. Thank you for sharing your opinions; the official results are ready to see print at last. The results are given as the average of all votes, for a final score ranging from 1 to 5.

As I mentioned in the preliminary results in issue #38, the biggest surprise to us was that more than half of you are at least 23 years old. About half of you subscribe.

There were some very mixed feelings about the various goodies and inserts we print from time to time. The MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ pages and map boards are the most popular inserts. Trading cards and GEN CON® information are the least popular, though they have some very loyal followers. Posters are somewhere in the middle.

So, what do you want to see more of? Why, AD&D® game generic adventures! These are far and away everyone's favorite (a score of 4.6), and we'll continue to provide several in every issue. We'll also print lots of your other favorites. In descending order, the other most popular types of adventures and settings are the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign (score of 3.8), GREYHAWK® adventures (3.1), the RAVENLOFT® demiplane (2.8), generic D&D® game adventures (2.7), and DRAGONLANCE® adventures (2.6). We'll try to publish these as often as we can.

Some types of adventures are less popular but have dedicated followings. We'll try to publish these types of adventures once a year or so. They include, in order of popularity, D&D Known World adventures (2.5), Viking adventures (2.5), DARK SUN™ modules (2.4), SPELLJAMMER® voyages (2.4), and AL-QADIM™ adventures (2.2). I suspect that the AL-QADIM game world is more popular than the survey suggests, because it had only been available for three months when we printed the survey.

We probably won't be publishing Oriental (2.1), LANKHMAR™ (2.1), African (2.0), HOLLOW WORLD® (1.9), or Maztica adventures (1.9). Elements taken from *Oriental Adventures* or other sourcebooks are okay if the adventures themselves are not in these settings. Younger readers also enjoyed trading cards.

It was interesting to see how your preferences varied by different age groups. Yes, younger readers tend to play the D&D game more than the AD&D game, but they also prefer the DRAGONLANCE and DARK SUN settings to any others, while older readers tend to play a greater variety of settings.

As for adventure locales, dungeons and caves are the most popular kind of adventure with everyone (a rating of 4.1—listen up, authors!). Wilderness and city adventures are about equally popular after dungeons (both 3.8), followed by castles (3.7). Waterborne and aerial adventures are definitely in the "once-in-a-while" category (3.0 and 2.8, respectively), though we'll print them if we get good ones.

Oddly, youth doesn't mean lighthearted and silly; younger readers didn't like humorous adventures nearly as much as older readers. Overall, people like the light touch now and again (1.9).

Mid-level adventures were the leaders, though not by much (4.3). Low-levels were almost as popular (4.2), with high-levels lagging slightly behind (4.0). We'll keep a mix of all three in every issue.

Humans are still the race of choice (4.1), though elves (3.7) and dwarves (3.4) have good followings. Wizards are the most popular class (3.9), followed by fighters (3.8), then priests (3.6), then thieves (3.5). Psionicists are much less popular (2.4)—half of you never want to see them or want to see them only rarely. Our policy on adventures (outside of the DARK SUN setting) that require psionics remains unchanged. Unless we are completely bowled over, we won't print them because of the lack of interest.

I hope you'll all see something you like in these results. The impact on what we print will be no more than a few small shifts, most of which you may not even notice until at least four issues down the road. For the most part, you told us that things were great the way they are, and we don't want to upset a winning mix. Thank you for the comments, letters, and praise that many of you added to your surveys.Ω

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Continued from page 7

the treasure obtained in each adventure, add information or items that will help the PCs complete the task. This may involve altering the treasure gained or even the setting of the adventure. Four, write any small linking pieces of action or information that are needed. Now you can give the PCs a real headache!

I have a question, also. A number of spell descriptions state that it is dangerous to place one extradimensional space within another extradimensional space, but there doesn't appear to be any more information about this. What happens if one extradimensional space is put inside another?

On another subject, the *Monstrous Compendium* is well named; it's awful. I want all my monsters in alphabetical order. I don't want a FORGOTTEN REALMS® Appendix or a FIEND FOLIO® Appendix. But since both sides of the pages have been used for listings (sometimes having creatures whose names start with different letters of the alphabet on each side), it is impossible to order them all correctly, which defeats the point of having the MC in a loose-leaf format.

The other major problem is that monsters have not always been listed directly under their own names. For instance, ochre jelly is listed under "Oozes/Slimes/Jellies." The situation becomes really complex in the case of a creature such as the werebat. Is it listed under "Bat," "Bat, Deep," "Bat, Ravenloft," "Lycanthrope, Werebat," or "Werebat"? (The werebat is actually listed under both "Bat, Deep" and "Lycanthrope, Werebat" but is given different statistics in each listing!) I have been forced to create a data base to cross reference all the monsters.

While on the subject of the MC, a few questions. What happened to the descriptions of the powers of sinister bats and the above werebats in the "Bat, Deep" listing from the FORGOTTEN REALMS Appendix? What happened in the original MC to the statistics and descriptions of Oriental vampires in the "Vampire" entry? Finally, where do I find the updated listings for the old demon princes and arch-devils, such as Orcus and Mammon?

Brian Stephens
Victoria, Australia

See page 177 of the AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Master's Guide *for a discussion on what happens when you place a* portable hole *inside a* bag of holding, *and vice versa. A* bag of holding *is also used in a novel way on page 15 of "Deadly Treasure" in this issue.*

The complete listing for "Bat, Deep" (including sinister bats and werebats) appears in FOR2 Drow of the Underdark. *The "Vampire" entry in the original* Monstrous Compendium *(MC1) was corrected in a later printing. If you would like to receive the corrected pages, please send a request to the Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Please be very specific in your request, and remember to include a self-addressed stamped envelope.*

Orcus and Mammon have not been redeveloped for the AD&D 2nd Edition game.

Even Rejections Aren't Flawless

I would like to respond to a letter in issue #38 by F.C. As previously noted by the editors, DUNGEON Adventures receives an average of 175 module proposals between issues. Only three to six modules are published per issue, so the editors must choose only the best—just enough to fill an issue. Almost every self-respecting author thinks his modules are flawless, yet still 170 flawless modules must be rejected every issue.

I know that it's frustrating, and that a more personal rejection would be appreciated (I've had four of my proposals rejected and I'm still waiting for a reply about my latest three), but I'd rather have the editors spend their time on keeping the magazine's standards high than waste it on personal replies.

What you *can* do about rejections is change the standard form. I believe that most of your potential authors have read several issues of the magazine and obtained the module guidelines. These authors might be offended (as I was) by the suggestions made in the form.

To the magazine staff and authors: Keep up the great work. I'm 18 now, and that means I'm joining the army for three long years in which I will not be able to play the AD&D game. Your magazine can give me something to look forward to during my service.

Yaron Berman
Hod Hasharon, Israel

Ω

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DEADLY TREASURE

BY COBY W. HEDBERG

Never mind the guardians. Watch the loot!

Artwork by Bob Walters

Coby is 21 years old and received his BBA in finance from Angelo State University. Since then, he's been accepted into the Air Force Officer Training School. He's been playing the AD&D® game since he lived in Germany, about 10 years ago, but hasn't had a chance to play regularly since his graduation. Coby would like to dedicate this adventure to his old college gaming crew: Clint, Tim, Chad, Eric, Ken, Jimmy, and Alex.

"Deadly Treasure" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 5-8 player characters of levels 10 + (60 + total levels). A good mix of character classes is helpful, and a high-level mage or cleric will be especially useful if one or more PCs find themselves lost on another plane during the course of this adventure.

This module includes one spell taken from the *Tome of Magic (ToM).* Two of the monsters appearing in this adventure come from the AD&D 1st Edition game *Monster Manual II.* Where these creatures appear, the appropriate rule book and page number are cited. Also, some of the magical items appear in the 1st Edition *Unearthed Arcana (UA).* These items have been marked with appropriate source and page references.

Due to the complex magical traps in this adventure, it is important that the DM be very familiar with the entire module before attempting to run it. The adventure has been designed as a stand-alone event that can easily be inserted into any campaign.

Adventure Background

The adventure begins when, during the course of their travels, the PCs find themselves in the small, rustic town of Greenbarrow. As they pass through the town square, a small crowd of townsfolk huddled around a posted announcement catches the PCs' attention. Upon closer investigation, the PCs find that the notice reads as follows:

> **Wanted: Brave Adventurers**
>
> A new tomb has recently opened for business in your area! The wealth of a wizard's lifetime can be yours! Defeat his traps! Slay his guardians! Zathis the Insightful took a century to collect these marvelous treasures. Now they can be yours in a matter of hours!

Hastily scribbled at the bottom of the page is the following note (in smaller script):

> Just follow the southern cart track for five miles. The tomb entrance is to the right. Look for a circle of stones. Only serious adventurers need apply.

If the party checks out the story, it appears to be legitimate. The southern road out of Greenbarrow leads through rolling farmland and grassy fields. Five miles down the track, about a hundred feet to the right, is a circular patch of brown, withered grass. The patch is about 400' in diameter and ringed by a number of small stone blocks. A pile of rubble and a well lie within the circle (see the "Tomb of Zathis the Insightful" section below).

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

High-level PCs might scoff at the idea of exploring some dead wizard's tomb. True adventurers will view this as a challenge to be conquered, but some high-level parties will be reluctant to partake in a "treasure hunt." The DM is encouraged to be inventive. For instance, the party could be hired by a distant wizard's guild interested in retrieving rare and powerful magical items for its private collection. The announcement of a wizard's tomb in the vicinity of Greenbarrow should be enough to attract the guild's (and the party's) attention.

The posted announcement is indeed true, but its author may come as a surprise to the party. The note was penned by the creator (and now permanent resident) of the tomb, Zathis the Insightful.

Many years ago, Zathis (a high-level mage) sensed that his career was coming to an end. Old age had taken its toll on his frail body, and his health continued to decline. Even though he was decidedly evil and possessed the power to become a lich, the "life" of an undead held no appeal for Zathis. Instead, he accepted his fate and set to work constructing a tomb to hold his remains and the treasures that had been his life's work.

However, in fashioning his resting place, the wizard realized that it would be only a matter of time before some adventurer found his tomb and despoiled it. Zathis had looted his own fair share of tombs in his time, so he was hardly one to complain. For this reason, he did not regard the adventuring "profession" with disgust, but rather with amusement.

After giving some thought to his predicament, Zathis decided not to take the route followed by so many tomb-builders before him. He would not sprinkle his tomb with a few cheesy traps, hoping they would do the job, while shoving all his treasures into "the room at the end." Doing it that way, someone was bound to get it all sooner or later, knowing the persistence of adventuring parties. Instead, he decided to let the treasures themselves guard his tomb.

Using the unique properties of many of his magical items, Zathis developed a number of fiendish traps. The added bonus of such traps was that the magical item involved would usually destroy itself or be destroyed by the adventurers. This struck Zathis as a delicious irony; a party might eventually penetrate his tomb and clean it out, only to discover that they had destroyed half the treasures on the way through.

Constructing the Tomb

Zathis wanted his tomb to be easily accessible. Since adventurers were bound to find his tomb sooner or later, he figured he might as well get it over with. He certainly had nothing to lose. After all, he would be dead. What did he care what happened to his treasure? What motivated him was simply the joy of knowing that his treasure would serve him one last time.

For this reason, Zathis chose to situate his resting place in the middle of a well-settled area. However, he knew that any such large-scale construction would hardly go unnoticed. Therefore, he researched a spell that he knew could help: *estate transference* (see *ToM*, pages 46-47). He then gathered the necessary materials: a *brazier of commanding fire elementals* and hundreds of blocks of hardened magma. He placed these blocks in a circle about a parcel of lovely countryside and buried the brazier deep beneath it. Then, he gathered his servants and raw materials onto the site and cast the spell, transporting the entire area to the plane of elemental Fire. Zathis used a now-expended *ring of wishes* to transfer an area greater than that allowed by his level.

Zathis spent nearly three years on the plane of elemental Fire constructing his tomb. When all was completed, he cast most of his workers into the fiery abyss that surrounded them and then used a *wish* spell to return his estate to its original site.

Back on the Prime Material plane, Zathis put the final touches on his tomb. He then entered it one last time, sealing everything behind him. Finally, he laid himself on his bier, drank a few sips of poisonous brew, and passed on. Now, his tomb awaits any adventurers willing to brave the dangers posed by its treasures.

Special Features of the Tomb

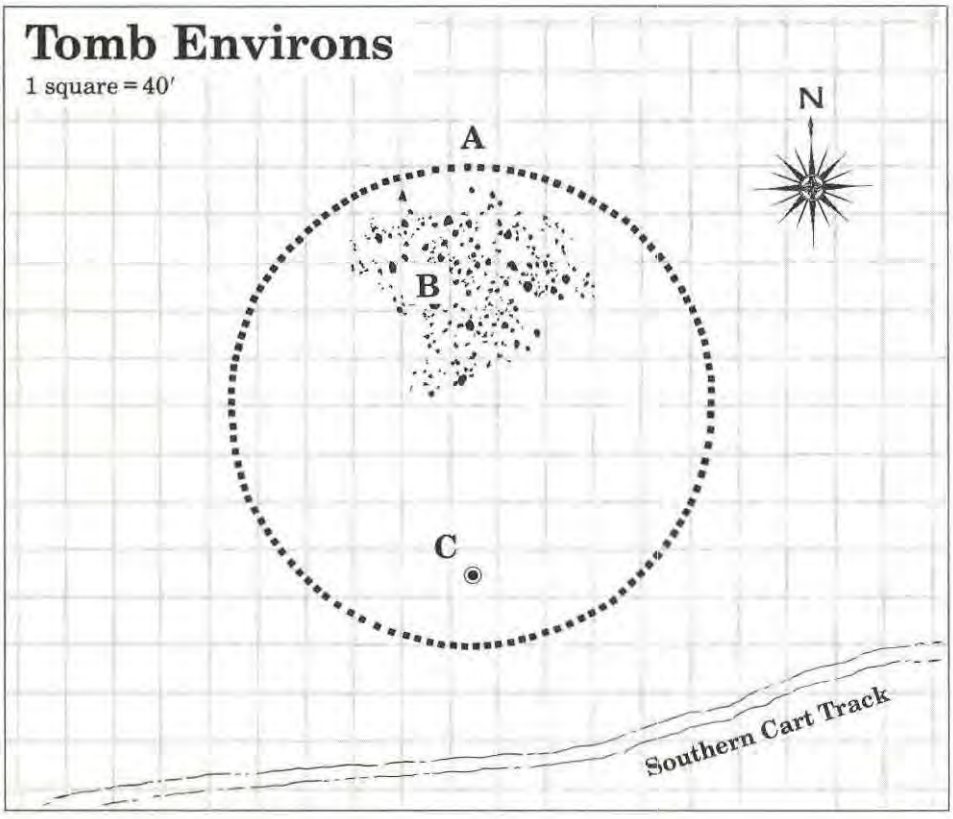
Before passing on, Zathis cast a couple of *wishes* to keep would-be plunderers from having too easy a time. The first safeguard he instituted regards the detection of magic. Everything in the tomb (including walls, floors, and ceilings) radiates magic of an undeterminable sort. A *detect magic* spell functions normally on objects removed from the tomb, however.

The second safeguard concerns *teleporting*. While within the area ringed by the stones, no form of *teleport, dimension door, passwall, word of recall,* or similar spell will operate (similar psionic powers are likewise inhibited). Spells of this sort are wasted when cast inside the tomb, while psionic abilities of this nature drain PSPs without yielding the intended results. Extraplanar travel (including *plane shift* spells) is unaffected. Magical gates operate normally.

It Pays to Advertise

One of Zathis's last acts was to dispatch a number of announcements to the surrounding communities. He figured that he might as well advertise the tomb's existence, as a service to adventurers who were bound to find it anyway. If the PCs inquire in Greenbarrow about the note or about the tomb area, they may learn a few useful facts.

In general, the locals know very little about the tomb site. None of the townsfolk will recognize the name "Zathis the Insightful," as Zathis took care not to reveal his identity before his "departure." Many of them will recall an old mage who started some kind of construction in the area about three years ago, but he always kept curious townsfolk at bay with his hired soldiers. A few weeks after construction began, the



mage, his soldiers and workers, and a huge chunk of countryside simply vanished. The townsfolk credited this bizarre occurrence to "black magics" and stayed well away from the crater that had been left behind. The crater remained unoccupied and little explored until the day before the party's arrival, when the countryside returned from wherever it had gone. This much of the story can be gleaned early in the PCs' investigation. Further rumors can be determined using the following chart (assuming the PCs talk with the townsfolk). The DM can randomly choose which rumors to relate, or select them as seems appropriate.

1. The announcement was tacked up only yesterday, but a number of locals have already gone to check it out. (True)
2. There's nothing there but an old well with a fake hatch that can't be opened. (Partly true; the hatchway can be opened, but the locals have been stopped by the *wizard lock*.)
3. The local blacksmith and his brothers are working on a way to pry open the hatch. They are determined to get into that tomb before anyone else. (True; these brothers are just one of the local "adventuring parties" who have been lured by the promise of treasure.)
4. This is just another scheme of Barney (the owner of the general store) to drive up the sales of his adventuring gear. (False)
5. It must be some kind of trick. Why doesn't the person who wrote the notice explore this "tomb" for himself? (False)
6. This whole thing reeks of black magic. More than likely, this is just the beginning of some diabolical mage's plot. (Partly true; magic is obviously involved, but there is no sinister scheme afoot other than what's described.)

The Final Lure

If the prospect of simply looting another treasure trove is not enough to entice the PCs into exploring the tomb, there are other factors for them to consider. Good-aligned PCs should be worried that the inexperienced townspeople will get themselves hurt or killed if they finally manage to enter the tomb. Perhaps the PCs could even see such a party of incompetents preparing to leave town for just that purpose. After one look at their rusty weapons, shoddy leather armor, and backpacks stuffed with empty sacks (for carrying out all the gold), any PC with half a conscience should feel a duty to keep them from harm. Further, the popular notion that the area of the tomb is rich in evil magic should also encourage investigation by conscionable PCs. If all of this still fails to move them into action, they are a churlish party indeed and scarcely deserve the title of "adventurers!"

Tomb Environs

When the PCs reach the tomb site, they find the ring of stones (area A), a pile of rubble (area B), and a well (area C), as shown on the "Tomb Environs" map. The PCs will notice that the grass within the circle is dead, the result of three years with no rainfall and very little watering.

When Zathis moved the estate back to this site, it filled in the crater that had been left behind and merged with the surrounding countryside. The notable features of the circle include the following:

A. Ring of Stones. The tomb of Zathis is ringed by a circle of small stone blocks. These blocks are carved from hardened magma and are roughly cubic, 2' × 2' × 2'. The blocks are spaced 5' apart and are buried halfway in the earth. The ring thus formed is roughly 400' in diameter. This ring was part of Zathis's *estate transference* spell.

B. Rubble. This area is littered with large stone blocks and debris, as if some vaguely circular structure once stood here. This was where Zathis's living quarters and those of his workers were located. When he was through with it, Zathis simply levelled the place and went below to his tomb. The party will find nothing of interest here, no matter how long they search.

At the DM's option, the PCs may spot 1-6 locals from nearby Greenbarrow searching the rubble for treasure. They are not having much luck, of course. All are 0-level humans with 3-6 (1d4 + 2) hit points.

C. Well. This well is 6' in diameter, with a 1'-high retaining wall. The sides of the well are made of smooth, seamless stone splotched with mildew and rust-colored smears. The bottom of the well, 20' below, can be seen through the water. At the bottom is a large metal

hatch (3′ × 3′) with a wheel handle. Engraved on the hatch in large letters is the word "Welcome."

The hatch is the only entrance to Zathis's tomb and has been *wizard locked* at the 23rd level of ability. A *knock* spell will unlock the hatch but not open it. Other magic prevents the hatch from opening until someone physically turns the wheel handle, at which time the hatch opens downward into area 1 (a *telekinesis* spell may also be used to turn the handle). The wheel handle cannot be turned until the *wizard lock* is dispelled or bypassed. The hatch is impervious to all physical attacks and most magical attacks, although a *disintegrate* spell will destroy it.

The hatch was intended to keep out the riff-raff; Zathis wanted only serious adventurers to explore his tomb. Zathis filled the well using a *decanter of endless water* (now resting in area 6). He then used a *dimension door* spell to enter the tomb for the last time (effectively bypassing the well) and later cast a *wish* spell to bar others from using similar means of travel.

Anyone who personally opens the hatch without securing himself first will be sucked through as the water rushes into area 1 below. A successful ability check against half the PC's Strength means that the adventurer has managed to catch hold of the hatchway lip before being sucked in.

Unless otherwise noted, there is no illumination in any of the tomb areas. Ceilings are typically 10′ high, and the walls are made of smooth and seamless stone. The halls and chambers were largely created using *dig, wall of stone,* and *stone shape* spells cast in succession. There are no wandering monsters in the tomb.

Tomb of Zathis the Insightful

Level One

1. Just Add Water. The entry hall to Zathis's tomb is this 20′-high hexagonal chamber. The hatchway from the well above opens in the center of the slightly domed ceiling. Suspended directly beneath the hatch, some 5′ below, is a monstrous 10′-diameter iron cauldron pierced by numerous coin-sized holes. The cauldron thus resembles a gigantic spaghetti-strainer. It is supported by four thick iron chains stapled to the walls. In the middle of the chamber's floor is a 20′ × 30′ patch of earth. This field of dirt has been laid atop the regular stone floor and is only 3″ deep. In the east and west corners of the room, large drain holes (about 2′ wide and 5′ long) have been carved into the floor. A hallway leads north.

Unknown to the PCs, six magical beans (taken from a *bag of beans*) have been planted in the soil field. The original bag has since been discarded. All the beans need now is a good watering for them to spring into action. This is where the PCs come in.

If the PCs open the hatch without first draining the well, all the water gushes out and splashes into the cauldron. The water then sprays forth from the holes and drenches the soil below, like a giant watering can. Anyone who falls through the hatch lands in the cauldron and is rendered helpless for the rest of that round and the following round as the water beats down on him.

The beans, once watered, sprout in a single round. The effects of the six beans can be determined by the DM, or he can use the following suggested effects:

Bean #1: The surrounding countryside within 2-8 miles of the tomb is suddenly struck by a radical weather change lasting 2-24 days. If the weather was warm and balmy, a fierce arctic blizzard springs up. If it was chilly, a blazing heat wave rolls over the area. Normal damage for exposure applies to any inappropriately dressed persons.

Bean #2: The walls of the room begin shrieking deafeningly. Normal conversation is impossible, and spell-casting has a 25% chance of failure. The noise lasts for 2-8 turns.

Bean #3: A swarm of 8-18 (2d6 + 6) darts buzz up from the bean and fly madly about the room, randomly dive bombing any PCs in a 40′ radius. Each dart attacks once per round, as a 4-HD monster (THAC0 17). A successful hit causes 2-5 hp damage and deactivates the dart (which can thereafter be used as a *dart +1*). Darts vanish if they have not struck a target after three turns.

Bean #4: Ghastly yellow-green vapors seep from the bean and fill the room in one round. The gas acts as a *cloudkill* spell, lasts 3-9 (2d4 + 1) rounds, and reduces vision to 10′ for the duration.

Bean #5: Boiling oil seeps from the bean and covers an area 60′ in diameter. Any creature contacting the oil suffers 2-8 hp damage each round. The oil remains for a full six hours.

Bean #6: The bean turns into a large horsefly and buzzes annoyingly about the nearest PC. If left alone, the fly will continue to buzz, land on, and bite the PC for 2-16 turns. During this time, the PC has a −2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Further, his AC is worsened by 2 and spell-casting is 90% impossible. If swatted, the fly either squashes normally (40%), turns into an ebony fly (30%), or transforms into a chasme (30%).

All six beans' effects occur simultaneously, which could prove very hazardous to PCs trapped in the room at the time.

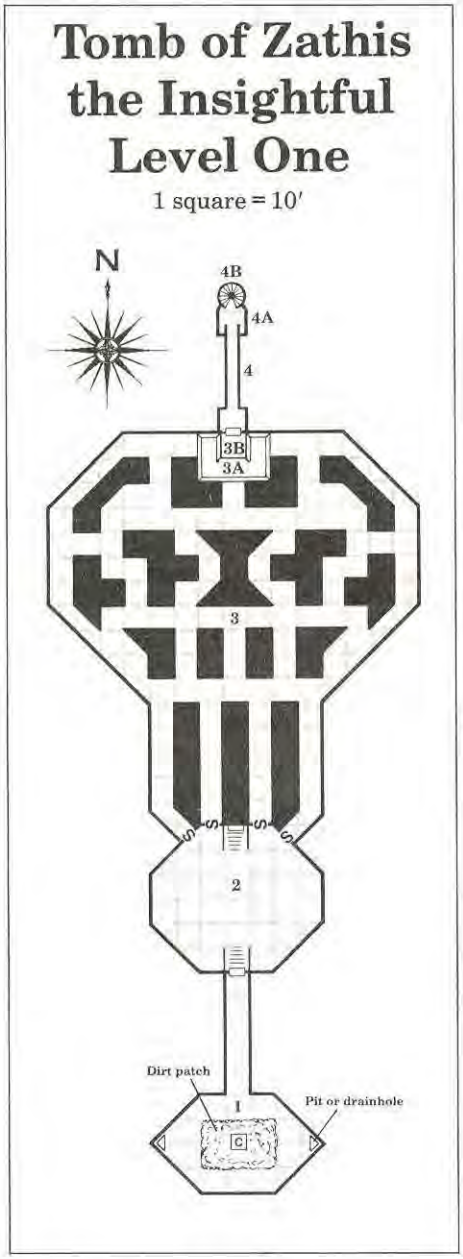
Chasme: INT very; AL CE; AC −5; MV 6, fly 24 (D); HD 8 + 2; hp 38; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/1-4; SA spell-like powers (8th level of ability), sight causes fear, drone causes sleep, claw hits continue to bleed until magically healed; SD immune to electricity, nonmagical fire and poison; half damage from cold, magical fire and gas; MR 50%; SZ M (7′ long); ML 15; XP 30,000; MC8 (Tanar'ri, greater).

Chasme have innate *detect good* and *detect invisibility* (always active), plus the following spell-like abilities usable once/round, one at a time: *darkness 15′ radius, infravision, teleport without error* (not within the tomb), *insect plague, ray of enfeeblement, telekinesis, gate* (usable three times per day with 40% chance of success for 2-20 manes, 2-5 cambions or one chasme).

The holes in the room's corners are meant to let the water escape. They don't connect to any rooms; they just drain away into the earth. The hallway leads 50′ to the door opening into area 2.

2. Smoke Gets in Your Eyes. The door to this room is airtight, a fact easily discovered by a brief examination. It is unlocked, however, and may be pulled open with little difficulty. As soon as the door is drawn open, huge billows of smoke pour forth into the hallway, filling it in a single round. The smoke continues to issue from the room beyond, eventually filling area 1 and gushing out the entry well (if it was left open) into the fields outside.

The room beyond is octagonal with a ceiling height of 20′. The floor is 5′ below the room's doorway and is reached by a short flight of steps. An identical set of steps on the opposite wall leads up to a false door. The party won't notice any of these features, however, as the entire room is filled with



thick, choking smoke. The PCs must explore the area by touch only; visibility is zero. Additionally, unless a PC uses appropriate magical protections (such as a *necklace of adaptation*) or takes other precautions (holding one's breath etc.), he will take 1-2 hp damage per round from smoke inhalation and will have a −2 penalty to all attacks, ability checks, and so forth for as long as he remains in the smoke and for 5-10 rounds thereafter.

All this smoke comes from an *eversmoking bottle* that has been left unstoppered on a shelf 5′ above the false door in the north wall. The smoke can be plugged only with the bottle's original stopper, which rests on an identical shelf above the entry door. The command word to re-stopper the bottle is not written anywhere on the item and can be discovered only through the use of appropriate magic (*identify* and *legend lore* spells, for example).

The real danger in this room comes from the smoke para-elemental that Zathis bound to this area. The elemental hovers near the ceiling in the center of the room until the party enters. At that time, it flies full speed at individual targets and retreats to the ceiling after each pass (a successful hit in this form inflicts double damage on its target).

After two or three such attacks (or if the adventurers retreat), the elemental changes to its black ash form, taking one round to switch. If the PCs are still in the room at this time, the elemental rolls forward into the greatest concentration of PCs and attacks all targets within 10′.

The elemental fights until slain, as it loathes its imprisonment here. The PCs are not likely to detect the elemental before it attacks, and even then they will have difficulty fighting it (due to the enveloping smoke). Attacks against the elemental are made at −4 due to the smoke cover (plus the −2 penalty caused by smoke inhalation, if applicable), and it makes all saves at +4.

Smoke para-elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 3 (−1 in smoke cover); MV 6, fly 18 (E); HD 12; hp 88; THAC0 9; #AT special; Dmg 2-16; SA double damage in smoke form, attack all targets within 10′ in ash form; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 11,000; MM2/98.

The false door appears normal to the touch but cannot be opened (it feels like it is simply stuck). The four secret doors are at floor level and can be discovered by touch at only half the normal chance (1 in 6 for elves, 1 in 12 for all others). The doors can be detected normally if the smoke is cleared from the room (by removing or stoppering the bottle).

3. Wight This Way. This large room is reached by any one of the four secret doors in area 2. If these doors are left ajar and the *eversmoking bottle* remains unstoppered, smoke will gradually filter into this area. The whole area has been planned out as a sort of maze, but not to confuse intruders (the layout is pretty simple). Instead, it has been designed to aid the defenders within: four wights.

These wights were created under Zathis's direction by Dranloc, a conscripted evil cleric (for more on Dranloc, see area 13). The wights were then ordered to guard this area and have been trained in the use of some of Zathis's simpler magical items. When the party first enters the maze, each wight watches down one of the four hallways. As soon as a wight detects a PC, the creature alerts its fellows, and they follow this pre-arranged plan:

Each wight carefully sprinkles itself with a pinch of *dust of disappearance,* which it carries in a small pouch around its neck (2-5 pinches available per wight). This renders them *invisible* for 11-20 turns and will not be dispelled even if they attack. Further, they cannot be detected even by the use of *detect invisibility* spells.

The *invisible* wights silently tail the party whenever possible. If they are somehow detected prematurely, the wights immediately attack. Otherwise, they seek to pick off stragglers or attack a group split off from the rest. If no such opportunities present themselves, the wights wait until the group is stopped by the pit (area 3A) before attacking.

The wights almost always attack by surprise, concentrating their efforts on one opponent at a time. Their invisibility gives them a −2 bonus to their surprise roll and also improves the wights' armor class to AC 1. Further, the wights have a +2 bonus to their first attack rolls, and the PCs lose all shield and Dexterity bonuses.

The wights are wearing the following magical items:

Wight #1 wears a *ring of shocking grasp,* which it uses with every attack for as long as it is able. This increases its claw damage to 8-18 (1d4 + 1d8 + 6) for its first three successful attacks.

Wight #2 wears a *ring of Boccob* (see *UA,* page 92). If the wight is struck by a magical device, the ring negates all the devices magical effects for that attack, and possibly drains it completely.

Wight #3 wears a *ring of the ram* with 30 charges remaining. It employs this device against anyone near the edge of the pit at area 3A, seeking to knock them in. It always uses the ring at maximum power (three charges per use), inflicting 3-18 hp damage and forcing the victim to save vs. spell at −2 to

avoid being knocked down (or into the pit). If the first target of this attack is surprised, he should receive no saving throw bonus for Strength or weight (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 149).

Wight #4 wears a *necklace of strangulation.* Naturally, the wight is immune to the necklace's effect, and the necklace may be removed from the wight's body normally once it is slain.

Wights (4): INT average; AL LE; AC 5 (1 while *invisible*); MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 33, 30, 27, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; MR undead immunities; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC1.

3A. Pit. This pit is smoothly carved and 20′ deep but is otherwise unremarkable. Anyone falling into the pit takes 2-12 hp damage. The pit is partially enclosed by the dividing walls of the maze.

3B. Platform. This 10′ × 10′ platform is level with the rest of the floor. The door beyond is ordinary and unlocked.

4. First Crawlway. This section of corridor is much narrower than those found elsewhere in the tomb. It is only 3′ high and 3′ wide and runs for just over 30′. PCs taller than 4½′ must crawl through this passage; shorter characters can walk. Movement modes and rates can be determined using the following chart:

Character's Height: Movement Rate

Less than 3′: Full movement, walking
3′ to 4½′: ⅔ movement, walking
Over 4½′: ½ movement, crawling

The crawlway itself is not dangerous; however, exiting it may give the PCs some trouble. The walls of the crawlway extend about 5′ into area 4A. The floor of the crawlway is elevated several inches above the floor of area 4A, forming a small lip. An *enlarged bag of holding* has been stretched around this entire section of protruding hallway. This means that anyone standing in the last 5′ of the crawlway is considered to be inside the bag. When the lead PC reaches this section, the DM may read or paraphrase the following:

> The hallway you have been crawling through ends up ahead. A thick cloth sheet seems to be stretched across the passage before you, barring further progress.

The *bag of holding* is very snugly stretched around the mouth of the crawlway. If the cloth is poked gently, it will yield a little but remain taut. A firm, gentle pressure against the cloth (which is actually the bottom of the bag) is required to work the bag free. A PC attempting this takes 3-6 rounds and may not use any sharp or pointed instruments. Note that a PC will have to study the cloth wall carefully and experiment a bit before he even realizes that the cloth is not a fixed barrier.

If the cloth is punctured for any reason (as by a PC trying to carve his way past it), the bag ruptures immediately. The entire 5′ of crawlway as well as any PCs or objects therein will be sucked into nilspace and quite likely lost forever. Powerful magic (*wish* spells, an *amulet of the planes,* etc.) may allow the lost PCs to return. Specific details of this mishap are left to the DM.

If anyone carrying a *portable hole* enters the 5′ section of crawlway while the *bag of holding* is still in place, a *gate* opens to a random plane. The *portable hole, bag of holding,* and all PCs within a 10′ radius of the *gate* are drawn in. The DM may use this as a springboard for an extraplanar adventure.

The *bag of holding* has been permanently *enlarged* to roughly three times its normal size. If retrieved intact, it can hold up to 500 lbs. (70 cubic feet) of material, and this capacity will not diminish if the bag is somehow returned to normal size.

4A. Crawlway Exit Room. Aside from the crawlway and staircase, this room is bare.

4B. Staircase. This spiral staircase, carved from the rock, winds downward 50′ to the next level of Zathis's tomb. There are no handrails, but the stairs are not innately dangerous.

Level Two

5. Watch for Falling Towers.

> The hallway before you is irregularly shaped. It is 10′ wide to start with, then widens to 20′ for a section. Beyond this, the hall narrows again but soon widens once more. It finally narrows back to 10′ and turns a corner. The ceiling is very high, lost in shadow somewhere far above. The passage is smoothly carved but otherwise unremarkable.

This section of hallway is guarded by one of Zathis's former servants, an imp. This imp and his fellow at area 6 have been charged to defend these passages against all intruders, until Zathis's tomb (area 13) is penetrated. In exchange for their service, they have been promised the magical items currently in their possession as well as any equipment belonging to the intruders they slay. The pair will do all they can to end the PCs' lives, as the magical gear they will gain will greatly enhance their personal power and their ability to spread evil throughout the world.

The imp in this hallway, named Flea-biter by Zathis, has been given a pair of magical items to aid his mission: a *Daern's instant fortress* and a *wand of lightning* (54 charges; command word "Shaztafraz").

Flea-biter clings to the 40′-high ceiling *invisibly* and in large spider form. When the party comes down the corridor (from either direction), Flea-biter scuttles to the ceiling of one of the wider areas (shaded on the map), whichever is farther from the party. There, he clambers into a small cranny provided for him and *polymorphs* into his natural imp form.

When the first PCs enter the area below him, Flea-biter casts down the *Daern's instant fortress* while commanding it to grow to full size (the command word is "Impervious," and the resulting fortress is 20′ × 20′ × 30′ high). Anyone caught in the shaded area when the tower begins to expand must make a Dexterity check (at −4 if surprised). Those who pass the check are able to leap clear to the closest side; those who fail the check sustain 10-100 hp damage as the unfolding fortress either hurls them aside (50%) or crushes them underneath (50%). Pinned PCs cannot move, attack, or cast spells, and they remain trapped until the fortress is destroyed or returned to cube size (see below).

After the fortress falls, the imp flies down to the roof and enters it through the small door that opens on the imp's command. The door is impervious to *knock* spells. Once inside, Flea-biter

uses his wand to fire *lightning bolts* at the party through the arrow slits of the fortress. He continues this strategy until all the PCs are slain or have fled. If the PCs flee, the imp remains in the fortress for two hours before returning it to cube size (command word "Bitti-box") and resuming his post.

While the fortress is activated, the hallway is completely blocked on both sides, and only a 10′ gap exists at the top. Anyone attempting to fly, levitate, or otherwise pass through this gap is a natural target for the imp's wand. Inside the tower, the imp cannot be harmed by most attacks; the fortress takes the damage first. The fortress has 200 hp and can be harmed by magical attacks only. If the fortress is reduced to zero hp, it collapses instantly, and anyone within (including the imp) suffers 2-12 hp damage.

Note that *passwall, dimension door,* and similar spells that would allow PCs to enter or pass through the fortress do not function in Zathis's tomb.

Flea-biter will not leave this stretch of hallway while intruders are known to be near. While he knows of his companion's capabilities and duties at area 6 (and vice-versa), neither imp will move to help the other. They are too jealous of each other's magical items to cooperate.

Flea-biter is a straightforward strategist and has difficulty adapting to new situations. He will stick stubbornly to the aforementioned plan of attack, lacking the imagination to try something different. If his fortress is destroyed, he flees the area immediately, never to return.

The imps are bound to these areas by their agreement with Zathis. Once the PCs have found their way into area 13, the imps are allowed to pack up their magical items and seek their fortunes elsewhere. However, they may decide to stick around a while longer, if only to rob the party on the way out.

Flea-biter, imp: INT average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, fly 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spell-like powers, poison stinger; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; immune to cold, fire and electricity; save as 7-HD monster; regenerate 1 hp/round; MR 25%; SZ T (2′); ML 10; XP 650; MC1.

Flea-biter can cast a *suggestion* spell once per day, as well as the following spells once per round, one at a time: *detect good, detect magic, invisibility, polymorph self* (into large spider or goat).

6. Watery Cubes and Fiery Spheres. In appearance, this hallway is quite similar to area 5, but with one difference. At the point marked by the 6 on the map, a *decanter of endless water* gushes its contents straight into the air. The water shoots up 30′, plunges down to strike the surrounding floor, and seeps away through numerous drain holes. The decanter is set firmly into a depression in the middle of the floor, thus keeping the back pressure from rocketing it about the hall.

This hall, like area 5, is guarded by an imp. Rat-stabber clings *invisibly* in large spider form to the ceiling above the fountain. When the party approaches from either direction, Rat-stabber scuttles to the more distant of the 20′-wide sections. From this point, he clambers onto a small ledge built there and *polymorphs* back into imp form. He then waits to use his magical items—a *ring of spell storing* and a *book of infinite spells*—to snare and destroy the party.

The ring currently holds five *forcecage* spells (*forcecube* option) that operate at the 23rd level of ability (the ring was

one of Zathis's personal creations). The *book of infinite spells* is currently on its 11th page (out of 24), which is inscribed with the seventh-level wizard spell *delayed blast fireball.* This spell operates at 14th level. The imp wears the ring at all times; the book is stashed in a secret niche in the ceiling above the fountain.

Rat-stabber's plan of attack is to wait until the party nears the fountain. When they inspect it or walk by, he casts a *forcecube* around the *decanter of endless water* and as many PCs as possible. The *forcecube* seals off the drain holes, and the cube fills with water at a rate of 30 gallons a round. For ease of calculation, the cube will be completely filled in three rounds. A successful *dispel magic* spell will destroy the *forcecube;* otherwise, it persists for 29 turns. Water-breathing magic will allow the PCs to survive immersion, provided the spell duration is long enough (see the *Player's Handbook,* page 122, for drowning rules).

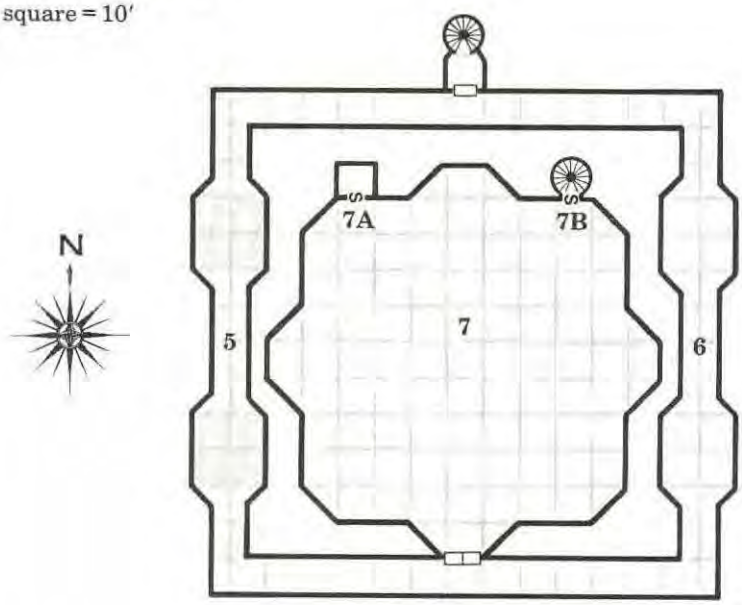
If the decanter is destroyed, the flood immediately ceases, but the water already in existence remains. Party members not trapped inside the cube can travel over the forcecube (it is only 10′ × 10′ × 10′), but it blocks passage to either side.

Destroying the decanter may not be as easy as it seems. The flask is ceramic and saves at +4 due to its magical nature. Hard blows will be difficult to land considering the close quarters of the cube, the treacherous footing afforded by the water, and the fact that the decanter will be whizzing around inside the cube under its own pressure once it is freed from its mooring in the floor.

In fact, this whizzing about could be dangerous to the PCs as well. The decanter makes 1-4 "attacks" every round, to be divided up randomly among the trapped PCs. A PC may be attacked more than once. The decanter strikes a PC if the PC fails a Dexterity check for that "attack." The check is made at −1 (cumulative) for every additional person in the cube, −2 (cumulative) for every round that passes (to a maximum of −6 on the third round, when the cube is full). The latter adjustment reflects the hazardous footing and slowing effects of the water. PCs with *free action* magic in effect may ignore this penalty. The decanter strikes for 1-4 hp damage per attack. A PC may grab the decanter with a successful

Tomb of Zathis the Insightful Level Two

1 square = 10′



Dexterity check at −2 (in addition to the penalties listed above). This will stop the decanter from rocketing about but not from spewing forth more water.

Once the PCs are occupied, Rat-stabber carefully lays down his *delayed blast fireball* behind them. He sets it to explode in two rounds, allowing him enough time to turn *invisible* and fly outside the blast zone. If the adventurers immediately flee the area (those who are able), Rat-stabber will attempt to imprison one or more of them along with the *fireball,* using another *forcecube* (and casting his *suggestion* spell, if necessary, to hold back a PC). The *fireball* inflicts 20-70 (10d6 + 10) hp damage to anyone within range. PCs trapped with the decanter take no damage (the *forcecube* absorbs the blast). Those trapped inside a cube with the *fireball* are entitled to a saving throw. Since there is no way to dodge the blast, all of the trapped PCs' equipment and magical items must save vs. magical fire or be destroyed, even if the PC makes his saving throw. Both PC and item saving throws are made at −4 due to the intense compression of the explosion.

Following these maneuvers, Rat-stabber *invisibly* leaves the area (assuming some PCs are still alive) and hides, waiting until all intruders have left before resuming his post. He knows the command words to the decanter and will use them to staunch its flow and set it back in place. The next three spells in the imp's magical tome are *shout, heat metal,* and *conjure elemental* (others should be determined by the DM as needed).

Rat-stabber is much craftier than Flea-biter in area 5. He hates to be seen by his enemies and always strikes from behind if possible (he may use such tactics if the PCs destroy his precious decanter). He takes great pleasure in outsmarting his opponents but may choose to reveal himself to them in their final moments if it presents no risk to himself.

Rat-stabber, imp: hp 13; other statistics as Flea-biter (see area 5).

7. Seven Years' Bad Luck.

This large room is roughly 90′ square with a large alcove set in the middle of each wall. The floor is of highly polished marble; the 20′-high ceiling

is of similar material. The area is well lit by a number of glowing brass knobs fastened to the ceiling. This light is reflected from every wall of the room, for the entire area is lined with hundreds of mirrors in every imaginable shape and size, constructed of countless different materials. The highly polished looking-glasses gleam in their frames of marble, rare woods, wrought iron, brass, silver, and even gold! The mirrors line the walls in three distinct rows. These rows are spaced about a foot apart from one another.

The brass knobs on the ceiling have *continual light* spells cast on them. Most of the mirrors here are nonmagical, although they all detect as magical (see "Special Features of the Tomb" section for details). There are approximately 600 mirrors altogether, each worth 20-200 gp. However, they are so cumbersome that carting them off will be difficult without magical means.

Only one mirror here is truly magical—an unassuming 4'-square metal-framed looking glass, actually a *mirror of life trapping.* This mirror is placed in the uppermost row on the wall directly opposite the double doors (some 110' distant). This mirror is placed too high off the floor for the PCs to be reflected therein.

The real danger of this device becomes obvious two rounds after the first person enters the room. At that time, a permanent *unseen servant* pushes the mirror off the wall, and it shatters into a million fragments to the floor below. The occupants of the mirror's 18 cells are instantly freed to vent their hostilities on any PCs present. The mirror's prisoners are as follows:

Farastu gehreleth: INT average; AL CE; AC −1; MV 15, fly 30 (C); HD 11; hp 73; THAC0 9; #AT 3; Dmg 2-7/2-7/3-12 or by weapon +7; SA spell-like powers (11th level of ability), battle frenzy; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; 120' infravision; adhesive body secretion; immune to acid, poison, fear, and illusions; half damage from cold and fire; MR 50%; SZ M (7' tall); ML 20; XP 28,000; MC8 (Gehreleth).

The farastu has the following spells, usable once per round, one at a time: *detect good, detect invisibility, detect magic, ESP, fear, invisibility, tongues.* It can cast *fog cloud* and *weakness* (reverse of *strength*) each three times per day, *dispel magic* twice a day, and *gate* once a day (40% chance for 1-2 additional farastu).

The farastu was summoned from Tarterus by Zathis many years ago to serve as a personal bodyguard. However, the mage soon lost control of the gehreleth and was forced to imprison it within the mirror. When freed, it immediately attacks the party, believing them to be servants of Zathis. Unless the PCs can convince it that they don't serve the dead mage, the gehreleth fights relentlessly to the death, ignoring morale checks. It is crazed and difficult to capture. The creature knows nothing of interest to the PCs and seeks only to slay its tormentors (which is how it views the party).

Salamanders (5): INT high; AL CE; AC 5/3; MV 9; HD 7+7; hp 52, 46, 42, 38, 31; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12 and 1-6; SA heat; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to fire, *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML 13; XP 2,000; MC2.

These salamanders were captured while Zathis's estate was residing in the plane of elemental Fire. The pesky creatures were always wandering onto his grounds, so into the mirror they went. When freed, the salamanders lash out violently at the party, venting their years of frustration on those they perceive as allies of their captor.

If the PCs are able to communicate with the salamanders and immediately tell them that they mean no harm, the creatures will cease their attacks long enough to hear what the PCs have to say. The salamanders know nothing of the tomb complex and are only interested in returning to their home plane. If the PCs offer to return them home, the salamanders will accept readily but offer nothing in exchange. The party may bargain with them, however, and eventually can talk the salamanders into accompanying them through the rest of the tomb. Even so, the salamanders will never take unnecessary risks and will demand a fair share of any treasure found. If they feel that they are being poorly treated or misled, they will instantly attack the party members.

Spectre: INT high; AL LE; AC 2; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 7+3; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* and cold-based spells as well as poison and paralysis; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000; MC1.

This creature was captured over a decade ago by Zathis, when he was still considering the possibility of becoming a lich. After his study of the spectre (the results of which helped dissuade him from pursuing lichdom), he forced it into the mirror and forgot about it. The spectre, when freed, furiously attacks any living creatures present until it is destroyed or turned.

Fire bats (11): INT semi; AL NE; AC 8; MV 6, fly 20 (B); HD 2; hp 15, 13, 12, 11 (×2), 9 (×2), 7 (×3), 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA automatic damage once attached to victim; SD immune to fire, detect invisible opponents automatically; SZ T; ML 11; XP 175; MM2/16 (Bat, fire).

Like the salamanders, these annoying creatures were captured when they intruded upon Zathis's estate. They are ravenous when freed and immediately attack the nearest warm-blooded creatures.

Two of the mirrors in the room conceal secret closets (areas 7A and 7B). They are large, full-length mirrors firmly affixed with *sovereign glue* to the lowermost tier on the north wall. The PCs must shatter or somehow bypass these mirrors (using a *portable hole,* for example) to enter the cubicles beyond. Knocking on either mirror will confirm the hollow space behind it. Otherwise, PCs may need to shatter several mirrors before finding the ones that conceal secret rooms. Shattering a mirror has no adverse effect.

7A. West Closet. This small, bare, 10' × 10' chamber contains nothing but a *mirror of opposition* mounted on the opposite wall. The mirror creates a duplicate of the first PC to look into the room. The duplicate attacks as normal.

7B. East Closet. This closet contains a spiral staircase that winds down 20' to area 8 on the next level.

Level Three

8. All's Well.

This octagonal chamber is dominated by two features: a spiral, stone staircase leading to the level above and a large cistern. The well is 6' in diameter and rimmed by a 3'-high stone ledge. The bottom of the cistern cannot be seen through the murky water that rises to within 1' of the lip of the retaining wall. An empty bucket and

metal dipper lie next to the well. The only other notable feature in this room is an exit tunnel to the south, a mere 3′ high and 3′ wide.

The real danger in this room comes from the cistern. At the bottom of the 20′-deep well, Zathis placed a *well of many worlds* and opened it into the River Styx. The waters of forgetfulness now fill the cistern to the brim and await anyone unwary enough to sample it. Any PC who touches or drinks the water must save vs. spell or completely forget his past life. This forgetfulness includes all memorized spells, all alignments other than the original one, and any weapon or nonweapon proficiencies learned since 1st level. Even if the save is successful, the PC is affected by the equivalent of a *forget* spell cast at 15th level.

Furthermore, for every turn the party spends in this room, there is a 10% cumulative chance of 1-3 hydroloths coming through the well to investigate (only one hydroloth can emerge from the well each round). If the party explores the cistern extensively (by prodding the bottom, dropping things into it etc.), this chance rises to 10% per round.

Due to special enchantments laid on this room, any creatures that come through the well (such as the hydroloths) are prevented from moving beyond this area. They can, however, return to their home plane via the well.

PCs who swim down to the bottom of the cistern will likely pass right through the *well of many worlds* and resurface in the River Styx on Pazunia, the first layer of the Abyss. Any PCs doing so who are affected by the waters of forgetfulness will be in serious trouble. Not only will they not realize where they are, but they will not even remember how they got there. Furthermore, this intrusion into the Abyss is not likely to go unnoticed. There is a 90% chance that 2-8 hydroloths appear in 1-4 rounds to investigate the disturbance.

Details of what befalls such unfortunate PCs is left entirely to the DM. The PCs will not realize at first that they are on another plane, but eventually the bizarre landscape and ceaseless attacks by tanar'ri will clue them in. At this point, they may use certain magical items or spells (such as an *amulet of the planes* or *plane shift* spell) to return to their own plane, provided they remember how to use their equipment and cast their spells.

If the trapped PCs do not possess such magic, they must seek help from a cooperative tanar'ri (if there is such a thing). Such a tanar'ri would definitely demand a high price for its help, and even then such assistance would likely be no more than telling the PCs where a gateway to some more hospitable plane exists or where a truly powerful tanar'ri dwells. Whether the PCs can find the gateway or persuade the tanar'ri lord to send them home will be an adventure in itself.

If the tanar'ri sense any weakness on the PCs' part, they will seek to slay them immediately. The PCs will likely have to prove themselves in battle many times before finding a tanar'ri willing to talk first and fight later.

Hydroloths: INT average; AL NE; AC −2; MV 6, glide 12 (E), swim 24; HD 7+14; THAC0 13; #AT 3 or 5 (if gliding only); Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-10 and 1-4/1-4 (if gliding); SA spell-like powers (7th level of ability), sleep spittle; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to acid, fire and poison; half or no damage from water-based attacks and gas; MR 40%; SZ L (10′); ML 13; XP 26,500; MC8 (Yugoloth, lesser).

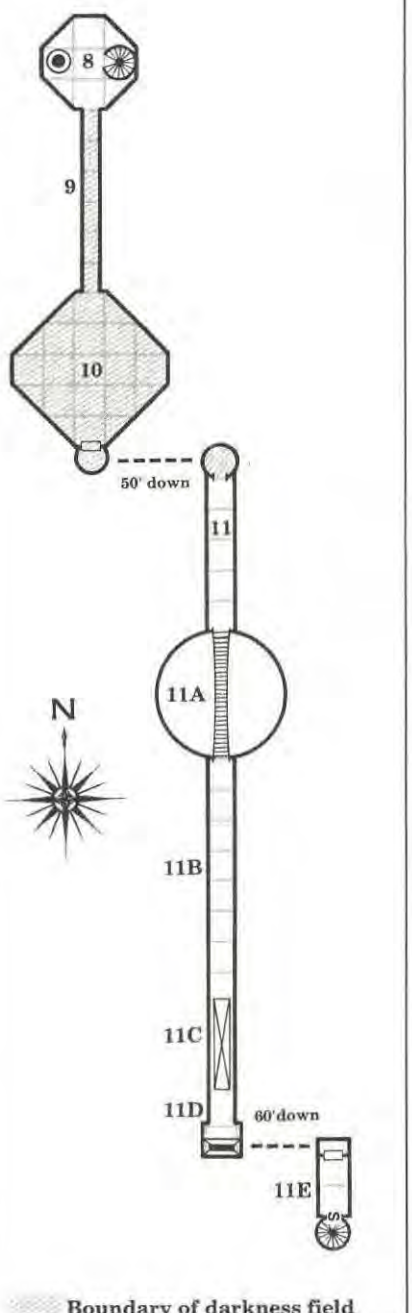
Hydroloths have the following spell-like powers usable once per round, one at a time: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error* (not in Zathis's tomb), *conjure elemental* (12-HD water elemental that fights for the hydroloth without being controlled; usable only on the Prime Material plane), *create water, darkness 15′ radius, dimension door* (not in Zathis's tomb), and *water walk*. They can *gate* twice per day (50% chance for one additional hydroloth).

At least one hydroloth summoned to the chamber will attempt to conjure a water elemental, particularly if the battle swings in favor of the PCs. The water elemental rises from the cistern, and any hit by the creature requires its victim to save against the waters of forgetfulness (see above).

Water elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6, swim 18; HD 12; hp 56; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30 (−1 per die damage if separated from cistern); SA touch causes forgetfulness; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 7,000; MC1. The water elemental, like the hydroloths, cannot go beyond this room.

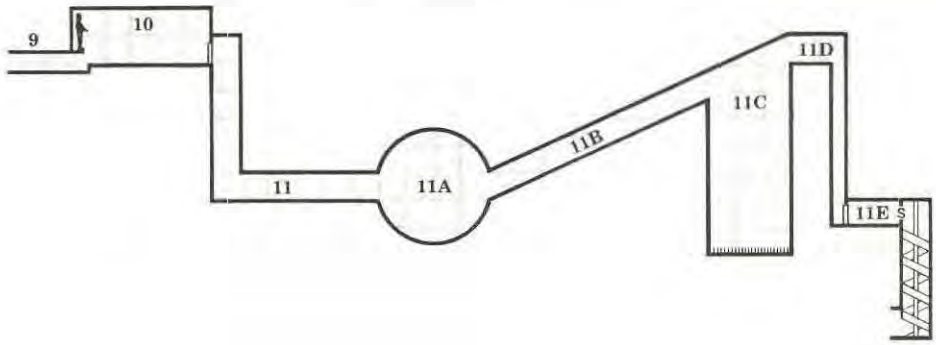
Tomb of Zathis the Insightful Level Three

1 square = 10′



The Gantlet (Areas 9-11E) Side View

1 square = 10′



9. Second Crawlway. This carved stone tunnel is the same size as the crawlway at area 4. It is 60′ long and extends an additional 5′ into area 10. The movement modes and rates for traveling through this crawlway are the same as those for area 4. However, two small problems are immediately apparent. First of all, the entire crawlway is magically darkened (see area 10 for details), so its exact length is difficult for the PCs to determine. Second, the entire floor of the crawlway is depressed 3″ below the floor of areas 8 and 10 and filled with a potent acid (which was poured by Zathis from his *alchemy jug,* now resting in area 13). The floor and walls of this crawlway have been magically strengthened to keep the acid from eating through.

PCs walking through the acid take 2-8 hp damage per round of contact. PCs forced to crawl through the stuff will take double damage (4-16 points). Furthermore, any footwear or gloves exposed to the acid must make a saving throw for every round of contact or be eaten through and ruined.

10. Blackout. The acid-filled crawlway leads into a large diamond-shaped room with a 20′-high ceiling. The walls and ceiling of the crawlway extend 5′ into the room. The top of the extended tunnel forms a shelf directly over the exit, 5′ wide and running about 20′ from wall to wall (refer to the maps depicting the above and side views of this room). These features will not be immediately noticed by the PCs, however, as the entire room is blanketed with hundreds of *continual darkness* spells. These spells were cast over a period of many months by the cleric Dranloc (see area 13).

The magical darkness extends 60′ down the crawlway (area 9) and fills the shaft leading down to area 11. Any *light* or *continual light* spell brought into this area immediately cancels out the first *continual darkness* spell that it encounters (leaving the area as dark as ever). Torches, lanterns, and other normal sources of light will fail to illuminate the area at all.

The only egress from this dark room is a single, easily found door on the wall opposite the crawlway. The door is locked, but it may be picked, forced, or opened with magic. Directly beyond the door, a 10′-wide circular shaft plunges 50′ to area 11 on the next level. There is no ledge to the shaft at all.

PCs who open the door carelessly (such as by breaking through it or rushing past it without prodding the floor beyond) will plummet down the shaft, taking 5-30 hp damage from the fall. A permanent *alarm* spell has been laid at the bottom of the shaft. The first person to make contact with any part of the floor triggers the *alarm,* a loud ringing that lasts for one round. The noise immediately alerts the simulacrum in area 11 to the party's presence.

The most noteworthy feature of this room is its guardian, a fearsome stone golem. The golem has a highly strategic position—it stands on the ledge directly over the crawlway. The golem has been instructed to attack anything that enters the room until the target either flees or is destroyed (it is not inhibited by the *darkness* in any way). The golem was constructed in this very room by Zathis and is too large to leave through either exit.

Stone golem: INT non; AL N; AC 5 (1 in darkness); MV 6; HD 14; hp 60; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA cast *slow* spell every other round; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; MR immune to all spells except *rock to mud* and *stone to flesh;* SZ L (9½′ tall); ML 20; XP 10,000; MC1 (Golem, greater).

The golem casts its *slow* spell on the first person to emerge from the crawlway, then throws another *slow* spell two rounds later. After this, the golem steps down from the ledge and engages the party in melee. Unless the party has some way of seeing the golem in spite of the darkness, the PCs will lose all shield and Dexterity bonuses and attack the golem at −4 (PCs with the blindfighting proficiency have only a −2 penalty to attack rolls).

The golem stands in front of the crawlway for as long as possible, thus blocking anyone still in the tunnel from entering the room. PCs attacking the golem from the crawlway have a −5 penalty to attack rolls due to the confined space (in addition to the −4 penalty for the darkness). The golem moves away from the crawlway to attack PCs in the room if it must, but it cannot pursue PCs who flee the area.

11. The Gantlet. Zathis designed the next few rooms with a special guardian in mind: a simulacrum of himself! The sizes and shapes of these areas have been purposefully fitted to take advantage of certain spells and magical items employed by the simulacrum in defense of the tomb. The simulacrum, Zathis II, has a very specific and complex plan of action to follow when defending the gantlet. It is important that the DM thoroughly familiarize himself with these tactics before attempting to run this section. A side view of the gantlet has been provided to help clarify the room positions.

Zathis II, simulacrum: AL LE; AC −2; MV 12; M12; hp 35; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 16, I 18, W 15, Ch 14; ML special; XP 9,000; *PH*/186; *bracers of defense AC 3, ring of protection +3, ring of spell turning, slippers of spider climbing, dagger +3.*

Spells memorized: *hold portal, magic missile* (×3); *invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, stinking cloud; dispel magic, fireball* (×2), *lightning bolt; Evard's black tentacles, ice storm, minor globe of invulnerability, stoneskin; feeblemind* (×2), *telekinesis, wall of iron; project image.*

Zathis II carries sufficient spell components to cast each listed spell twice. Additional components are stored in his bedroom (area 11E). If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, the simulacrum uses one of his *fireballs* to incinerate himself and his belongings, and possibly a few nearby PCs as well.

Before the PCs even enter the gantlet, Zathis II will have cast his *stoneskin* and *invisibility* spells upon himself. Once alerted to the party's approach (by the alarm at the bottom of the circular shaft), the simulacrum uses his *slippers of spider climbing* to cross area 11A. Once across, he prepares a *fireball* spell (see below).

11A. That Blasted Bridge. This chamber is a perfect sphere, 40′ in diameter. A slender rope bridge runs through the center of the sphere, connecting the only two exits. The bridge is perfectly ordinary and is fastened securely at either end by metal hooks set in the stone. The room is well lit by a *continual light* spell cast on the ceiling.

When the party reaches the midpoint of this room (whether on the bridge or not), Zathis II hurls a *fireball* into the center of the room (negating his *invisibility*). The resulting blast affects every person in the room but does not extend outside the spherical room. The explosion instantly incinerates the rope bridge, dumping all PCs thereon to the floor below. This fall causes 2-12 hp damage to PCs in the middle of the room or 1-6 points to those 10′ on either side. The curvature of the room causes PCs to slide down to the bottom of the sphere. The simulacrum then hurls a *stinking cloud* spell at the greatest concentration of PCs (if time permits) to cover his escape up the hallway toward area 11B.

11B. Sloped Passageway. This hallway is 10′ high but only 5′ wide. The floor is extraordinarily smooth and runs upward at a 30° angle for about 70′ (though it will appear to the PCs that the hallway runs for 100′; see area 11C below). Combat is hampered in this slanted hall, and all melee and missile attacks are −2 to hit.

The simulacrum uses its magical slippers to avoid the concealed pit at area 11C, then casts his *project image* spell on the north side of the pit. Zathis II allows the party to proceed half-way up the corridor before cutting loose with his *lightning bolt* (which appears to be cast by his *projected image*). The lightning strikes every creature in the narrow confines of the corridor (save vs. spells for half damage), and PCs who fail their saving throw fall down and slide to area 11A (unless something like another PC blocks their way).

If he has time, the simulacrum pulls his image back to area 11D and casts his *ice storm* spell (sleet version) to fill the hallway. The image appears to walk up the slope without difficulty, undaunted by the concealed pit (area 11C). The PCs will find that the sleet-coated hall is completely impassable by normal means.

11C. Pitfall. This section of the hallway floor is illusory. Any PC traversing this stretch of hallway will fall through and land at the bottom of a 30′-deep pit lined with short iron spikes (the pit is 50′ deep on the south side where the corridor is higher; see side view map). Such an unfortunate plunge causes 1-6 hp damage per 10′ fallen, plus an additional 1-6 hp damage per spike (1d4 − 1 spikes per PC).

The first person landing in the pit triggers a *magic mouth* spell that says, "Answer my riddle to open the hidden door: I am a cold stone black as night, but I burn bright and warm. What am I?" This is a trick, as the answer ("coal") is the command word that activates a *rope of entanglement* strewn upon the pit floor. If the riddle is answered correctly, the rope automatically ensnares anyone in the pit, up to eight man-sized creatures. The rope cannot be broken by sheer strength and is harmed by edged weapons only. It has AC −2 and 22 hp; all damage must be inflicted by the same creature. If the rope is severed, it is destroyed. PCs bound by the rope cannot attack, cast spells, or climb out of the pit (and are ripe pickings for the simulacrum). Entangled PCs with rope use proficiency can attack the rope using daggers or knives if they make a successful proficiency check (at half the usual chance) each round.

11D. Platform and Shaft. The end of the hallway is level and ends in a small 10′ × 10′ chamber. The far side of the chamber lacks a floor, however. It forms a 5′ × 10′ rectangular shaft that plunges 80′ to area 11E. This shaft has no rungs or ledges of any kind.

Zathis II waits here (with or without his *projected image*, depending on the time elapsed) for the PCs to arrive. When he detects their approach, the simulacrum casts his *minor globe of invulnerability* and *mirror image* spells as needed, then throws his *magic missiles* and *Melf's acid arrow* at the lead members. Remember that anyone approaching him incautiously across area 11C will fall through as detailed above. Zathis II then uses his *feeblemind* spells, targeting opposing spell-casters and missile-users first.

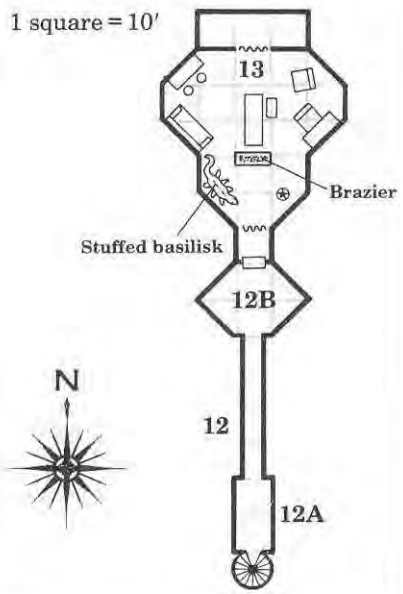
If the PCs discover the pit trap too easily and appear capable of circumventing it, Zathis II uses his *telekinesis* spell to pull (or push) PCs over the edge. If the simulacrum is still hard pressed, he will flee down the shaft to area 11E, using his magical slippers. Once at the bottom, he casts his *Evard's black tentacles* spell to fill the shaft behind him. He then retreats to area 11E, sealing it off with *hold portal* and *wall of iron* spells.

11E. Bedchamber. A plain wooden door leads into the spartan bedchamber of Zathis II. The room contains only a plain bed, a nightstand, and a wooden footlocker. A *continual light* spell has been cast on the ceiling.

The footlocker is neither locked nor trapped. It contains Zathis II's spell book (which contains only the spells that the simulacrum has memorized) and spare spell components, enough to cast each listed spell another 5-8 times. On the far wall (behind the bed) is a secret door that can be detected normally. It leads to a small closet that holds only a spiral staircase of stone, leading down 40′ to area 12A on the next level.

If driven back to this chamber, Zathis II immediately begins rememorizing his spells. If the party manages to break

Tomb of Zathis the Insightful Level Four



through before he is finished, he will not hesitate to cast his remaining spells, saving his last *fireball* spell for a suicide maneuver that destroys himself, his spell book and spell components, possibly his magical items, and most of the chamber's furnishings. The simulacrum will not go through the secret door for any reason.

Level Four

12. Third Crawlway. This crawlway is the same size as the other two crawlways (areas 4 and 9). The movement rates and modes through this area are the same (see area 4 for details). Like the second crawlway, the floor of this hall is 3″ below the floor of the room at either end (areas 12A and 12B). This space has been filled to the brim with oil obtained from the *alchemy jug* in area 13. The oil is not harmful to travelers, just messy. This is prone to sudden change, however.

A 5′-square area just outside the crawlway's exit in area 12B forms a sensitive pressure plate. Anyone treading on it causes a small ledge high above the crawlway exit to tip forward, dropping a flask full of *oil of fiery burning*. The flask explodes into flame upon breaking, causing 5-30 (5d6) hp damage to all within 10′ (save for half damage). What's more, the miniature *fireball* ignites the oil in the crawlway, inflicting 2-12 hp damage per round to any PCs trapped inside and 1-6 hp on the round after they leave. The oil in the crawlway burns fiercely for three turns before going out.

12A. Crawlway Entry Room. This bare room has a 10′-high ceiling and a stone staircase spiralling up to area 11E.

12B. Crawlway Exit Room. This small, hexagonal room is unremarkable. Its ceiling is 20′ above. A small ledge 15′ up the wall and directly above the crawlway's narrow exit holds the flask of *oil of fiery burning*.

A huge iron valve is set into the north wall. This door is a good 6″ thick and has a huge wheel instead of a handle. Inscribed in Common on the door's face are the words "Knock before entering." If the wheel is turned clockwise and pulled, the door opens normally.

It is not necessary to knock (or *knock*) on the door; there are no ill effects from failure to heed this instruction. Anyone who follows the inscription's advice, however, activates a pair of *magic mouths* that appear just above the portal. The mouths speak the following in a deep, sonorous voice (one mouth takes over where the other leaves off).

> Congratulations, brave adventurers! You have reached the final resting place of Zathis the Insightful. Enter and take what you like, but I ask you not to disturb my remains. Surely you will grant me this. The treasures of a lifetime lie within. Enter, and take what you so richly deserve!

13. The Room at the End. The huge metal valve opens into the last room of the complex. Zathis spent a good deal of time in here while he was alive, so the chamber has the atmosphere or a sitting-room rather than a crypt. The wizard came here frequently to relax, especially in his last few months of life, as he preferred solitude to the bothersome noise and light of the upper works. Because of this, Zathis filled his tomb with a good number of creature comforts. He also stored here those magical items he couldn't employ elsewhere.

The DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players when the PCs open the door to area 13:

> The great portal opens into a small foyer about 10′ square. The far wall is hung with a pair of drapes drawn shut across an archway. The east and west walls each display a large weathered tapestry. The floor is covered with a thick, heavy carpet.

The tapestries are unremarkable works. The eastern tapestry depicts a hunting party before a large castle of red stone, and the western one shows a griffon in mid-flight. They were gifts from Zathis's friends several decades ago; each is worth 100-400 gp to the right buyer. The carpet is normal, worth about 25 gp, and very bulky (50 lbs). When the party passes beyond the drapes, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> This is surely the object of your quest, the wizard's tomb. However, it bears little resemblance to any tomb you've seen before. It looks more like a cluttered den or attic. The walls of this oddly shaped room are fairly bare, as is the ceiling 20′ above. The floor, on the other hand, is strewn with numerous rugs and carpets of varying size and quality. Practically every inch of the floor is covered.
>
> In the center of the chamber lies a low stone bier, 5′ wide, 4′ high, and 10′ long. The top of the slab has been draped with a sheet of red silk and padded with numerous well-stuffed pillows and cushions. Lying atop these cushions, looking perfectly relaxed, is a well-dressed, very old man. He appears to be asleep, but he never stirs and his chest never moves to draw a breath. His arms are folded over a stout wooden staff capped by a huge, glittering diamond in a gold setting.
>
> Next to the bier is a plain wooden table, atop which rests an opaque decanter, a small bottle, and four crystal shot-glasses. At the head of the bier is a tall brass coatrack that seems to be the room's sole source of illumination. It glows as if magical. Directly over the bier, hanging from the ceiling, is a plain unlit lantern with darkened crystal facets. At the very foot of the bier is a large brass brazier, filled with coals but unlit.
>
> To your immediate right stands a

nicely carved stone statue of a well-muscled man clad in jester's motley. The face of the man depicted is handsome and youthful but wears an unsettling expression of abject horror. The statue seems to be serving as a sort of hatrack, as numerous objects are hung from it. A warrior's helm, much bejewelled, rests somewhat askew on its head. A conical silk hat has been laid over the statue's outstretched arm, and a dark brown cloak is pinned around its neck. Also strung around its neck are a belt and scabbard containing a well-used broad sword. Two robes of velvety black have been tossed over the statue's other arm. At the statue's feet lies a pile of armor, atop which a shield has been propped.

Immediately to your left is a monstrous shape, an enormous basilisk that rears up with a baleful glare in its glassy eyes but never moves to attack. Just before it, lying loose on the floor, is a large egg roughly 5"-6" in diameter.

Against the east wall, along the portion that slants diagonally northeast to southwest, an ornate wooden writing desk is covered with writing instruments and papers. Pulled before the desk is a well-cushioned wooden chair. A tin wastebasket rests to the side.

Hanging from a chain in the far northeast corner of the room is a cloth-covered bird cage of some sort. Just beneath the cage is a well-appointed plush armchair. On the north wall, just a few feet from the chair, a low two-shelf bookcase holds numerous volumes. In the center of the north wall, a second set of drapes screens off another area. Against the northwest wall, a large stone bench supports a tremendous, three-tiered wooden rack filled with vials, bottles, and flasks of every description. Two wooden stools are positioned in front of the bench.

A long comfortable couch lies along the west wall, against the portion that runs northwest to southeast. A book lies open, face-down on one of the cushions. Over the couch is mounted a unicorn's head, its lips drawn back in a snarl. A small end table to the side of the couch supports a dirty pewter mug with an unwashed spoon beside it.

The floor is covered with 22 rugs and carpets, each worth 100-1,000 gp and weighing 20-80 lbs. Only one carpet here is magical—a small (3' × 5') *rug of smothering* laid just within the entrance.

Zathis lies peacefully on his bier. He is remarkably aged, with skin is tightly drawn across his bones, so thin it is nearly transparent. He is bald except for a wispy fringe of white hair and a fairly long white beard. The wizard is rather small in stature but seems to exude a certain air of authority, even in death. The six cushions he rests on are worth 50-200 gp each; the bolt of red silk is worth 100 gp. The staff that Zathis clutches looks remarkably like a *staff of the magi,* and the DM should encourage the PCs to think this. In reality, the staff is nonmagical. The diamond at the top is worth 10,000 gp, however (the entire staff is worth 12,000 gp for its quality and jewelry value).

Zathis wears a simple black robe, a gold amulet about his neck (500 gp), and two jeweled rings (2,500 gp each). If anyone should contact Zathis's body (even indirectly, as by *telekinesis* or an *unseen servant*) or try to remove anything on the bier, an *unseen servant* permanently placed in the tomb is instantly activated (see the later section on Zarrp for details).

The decanter next to the bier is actually an *alchemy jug.* The shot-glasses are each worth 35 gp. One shot-glass still holds some clear liquid within it, just a sip or two that smells like bitter almond. This is cyanide, the remnants of Zathis's last drink. Anyone sipping from this glass must save vs. poison at −4 or die instantly. The small bottle contains the remaining seven applications of the *oil of timelessness* that Zathis applied to himself just before death (he wanted to appear as "intact" as possible for the first adventurers who arrived). His body shows no signs of decomposition (and will not show any for years to come).

The coatrack is worth only 15 gp but has a *continual light* spell cast upon it. The lantern above the bier is a fully fueled but unlit *shadow lanthorn* (see *UA,* page 102). The brazier at the foot of the bier is actually a *brazier of commanding fire elementals.* This item was used as the central component for Zathis's *estate transference* spell.

The stone statue is actually one of Zathis's old enemies, a paladin of some repute. Zathis was able to ambush the paladin with his *temporal stasis* spell. He then stripped the warrior (Sir Ayvers by name) of his gear, dressed him up in a jester's motley, and placed him in an amusing pose. Zathis followed up with a *flesh to stone* spell and put the paladin on display in his keep for a while. Later, Zathis chose to bring Sir Ayvers into his tomb to keep him company while he worked and relaxed. Zathis loved to humiliate his foes, and this seemed to be a satisfyingly ignoble end to Sir Ayvers' career. If the paladin is restored to flesh by the party (assuming that he survives his system shock roll), he will still be under the effect of the *temporal stasis* spell.

Sir Ayvers: AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; Pa9; hp 66; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 16, I 13, W 17, Ch 18; no possessions (but see below).

If revived, the paladin will be grateful but will naturally desire to regain his equipment: the helm, armor, sword and shield. Since Sir Ayvers will find that he has been out of circulation for over two decades, he will likely wish to remain with the party until he can reacquaint himself with "modern" society. See "Concluding the Adventure" for his behavior after leaving the tomb.

The helmet is a *helm of brilliance* with 22 opals, 14 fire opals, nine rubies, and three diamonds remaining. Zathis tampered with the helm; if a PC puts it on without inspecting the lining closely, a small packet ruptures and spills a trickle of *dust of sneezing and choking* across his face. The PC must save vs. poison or die; success means the PC is incapacitated for 5-20 rounds. The armor is a set of *chain mail +4,* and the shield is a *large shield +3.* The conical hat is made of purple silk and has traditional moons and stars stitched on in silver thread (50 gp). The brown cloak is a *cloak of poisonousness.* The robes are ordinary but well made (10 gp each). In the pocket of one robe is a *wind fan.* The paladin's sword is a *broad sword +5 defender* with no special abilities.

The greater basilisk is a stuffed trophy. It was once the guardian beast of a rival wizard whom Zathis destroyed. He kept it here as a souvenir of that great victory. The egg is actually a large ovoid *stone of weight* that Zathis thought fit the display nicely. The first person to handle it can be considered its new owner.

The writing desk is sturdy and ornate-

ly carved. If it can be carried away, it could fetch up to 400 gp. Two bottles of ordinary ink, six quills from magical creatures, and 16 sheets of vellum lie scattered on the desk top. The desk has but one drawer. Inside is a wizard's scroll inscribed with *dig* (×3), *stone shape* (×2), and *wall of stone* (×2) spells, all cast at the 23rd level of ability. Zathis never got around to using this scroll to help construct his complex. The wastebasket is perfectly ordinary and rather battered looking. However, the bottom has been lined with a *portable hole* (Zathis hated emptying the trash) that is now filled with a huge amount of junk: crumpled bits of paper, discarded clothing, remains from past meals, and other such refuse. The hole can be found only if all this trash is dumped out first.

The cloth-covered birdcage is actually a *prison of Zagyg* (see *UA*, page 102). Inside the prison is Zathis's former associate, the evil priest Dranloc. Zathis had promised Dranloc before hiring him that the cleric would receive all the rewards he had been promised (see below) and would be allowed to live once his services were no longer required (Dranloc made sure that this last stipulation was part of the agreement). The pair accepted this arrangement (after some dickering) and Zathis, being lawful, followed it to the letter.

After his three years of faithful service were completed, Dranloc was given the wealth and magic he'd been promised and was indeed allowed to live (unlike Zathis's other workers). Naturally, though, Zathis couldn't afford to let the cleric just walk away. Dranloc knew too many secrets about the tomb complex (and about Zathis himself) to be released. So, Zathis simply trapped Dranloc in the prison cage, where he now whiles away the days waiting for someone to find him. However, he does have both his treasures and his life, exactly as he'd been promised.

Dranloc: AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; C6; hp 50; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 16, I 14, W 17, Ch 12; ML 12; XP 2,000; *bracers of defense AC 5, footman's mace +2, necklace of adaptation.*

Spells memorized: *command, detect magic, light, protection from good, sanctuary; find traps, hold person* (×2), *silence 15' radius, wyvern watch; continual darkness, locate object, meld into stone.*

In addition to the items listed above, Dranloc also possesses a *tome of understanding,* a *pearl of wisdom,* and six gems (base 5,000 gp value). These items were Dranloc's payment for his work in the tomb. Unfortunately, the magic of the cage prevents the magic of the tome and pearl from operating, and his gems certainly do him no good at the moment.

When the party enters, Dranloc will do everything he can to attract their attention. If the PCs hear him and uncover the cage, he tries to convince the party to free him, using whatever story or argument best suits his situation.

Dranloc will thank the party profusely if freed but will never offer to reward them (and will certainly never reveal what wealth he has). His primary motivation is greed; he does nothing unless it could somehow help make him richer and more powerful.

Dranloc is a wily, weaselly sort who prefers to talk his way out of corners rather than fight. His first priority will be to get free of the prison. After that, he will likely stay with the party, to discover their strengths and weaknesses. If the party is laden with magic and treasure, the cleric will become all the more oily and insidious. He cooperates with the party until he feels he has learned enough, at the very least until they have left the tomb. After this, he will go his own way (on good terms, if possible), only to return in the near future to relieve the PCs of their wealth.

Dranloc is rather short and overweight but still youthful and surprisingly agile. His eyes are beady and set close together, and he has a slick smile that he never stops flashing.

If freed, Dranloc can tell the PCs nothing about this room. By Zathis's orders, he was strictly forbidden to set foot in this chamber. Thus, he has never seen this room before (his cage was covered when it was brought in), so he will be very impressed by the wealth he sees. He encourages the PCs to clean out the place and take everything they can (he can always take it from them at a later date). Dranloc especially urges the PCs to take Zathis's staff, noting that it looks like a particularly rich prize. If none of the PCs wish to claim it, he will likely take it for himself (see the following for the consequences of this action).

The plush armchair under the cage has been enchanted to keep whomever sits in it comfortably warm (as per the *endure cold* spell). The chair is worth 2,000 gp to an interested buyer.

The two-shelf bookcase is worth 60 gp. The shelves are lined with numerous volumes, but there is a large gap on the lower shelf. This space once held Zathis's spell books, but these books have since been used to obtain the services of an arcanaloth (see Zarrp, below). The remaining works cover a number of scholarly subjects from alchemy to zoology. There are a number of works on the nature of the undead. Within one of these, a dog-eared page contains the formula for creating the potion that can turn one into a lich. These books are left over from Zathis's earlier notion of continuing his career as an undead.

Several books are devoted to alchemy (particularly the creation of potions) and to the nature of extradimensional spaces, two of the old wizard's favorite subjects. Each of the 60 works in the bookcase is worth 20-200 gp. The book containing the lich formula could be worth up to 5,000 gp alone, if properly (and carefully) marketed.

The stone bench, stools, and rack are unremarkable. However, many of the various containers on the rack hold potions. Within the numerous bottles and flasks can be found the following potions: *clairaudience, clairvoyance, dragon control* (one per evil dragon type), *ESP, human control* (humans and humanoids), *plant control, treasure finding,* and *undead control* (one each for shadows, spectres, and wights). All these potions are labelled. Two other flasks on the rack do not contain potions. One is a *flask of curses.* The first person to open it is affected by a *Mordenkainen's disjunction,* cast at 23rd level. Only the items and spells on the person opening the flask are affected.

The second special container in the rack is an *iron flask* containing an arcanaloth. If anyone disturbs Zathis's remains (as noted earlier), a permanent *unseen servant* will pull the stopper from this flask. Otherwise, the yugoloth is freed only if the PCs release him themselves (probably unwittingly). If the arcanaloth is unleashed, the cleric Dranloc immediately hides behind some furniture, using his *meld into stone* or *sanctuary* spells to avoid taking damage.

Zarrp, arcanaloth: INT supragenius; AL NE; AC −8; MV 12, fly 18 (B); HD 12+24; hp 96; THAC0 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-12; SA spell-like powers (12th level of ability), claw sting; SD +3

or better weapon to hit; immune to acid, fire, poison, and mind-affecting spells; half damage from gas; MR 60%; SZ M (6'); ML 15; XP 49,500; MC8 (Yugoloth, greater).

Zarrp can cast the following spells once per round, one at a time: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error* (not in Zathis's tomb), *continual darkness, control temperature 10' radius, shape change* (to any humanoid form), *telekinesis, warp wood.* He can cast the following spells each once per day: *advanced illusion, fear, gate* (40% chance of success for 1-6 mezzoloths, 1-2 dergholoths, or one arcanaloth).

Zarrp has all the abilities of a 12th-level mage. His current spell repertoire includes *color spray, shocking grasp, sleep, spook; detect invisibility, mirror image, stinking cloud, web; dispel magic, fireball, haste, vampiric touch; confusion, fumble, minor globe of invulnerability, shout; chaos, hold monster, wall of force* (×2); *death fog.*

Zarrp was summoned by Zathis just after the completion of the tomb. The arcanaloth was furious, but Zathis soon calmed him down and presented him with an offer he could not afford to pass up. In exchange for all of Zathis's spell books and most of his scrolls, Zarrp would allow himself to be imprisoned in an *iron flask* to await an intruding party. It was a risky proposition, but Zarrp considered the potential gain in power to be worth it. Zarrp was paid for his services in advance; he has already taken the books and scrolls back to his home plane and secreted them in his own red-iron fortress.

When freed (whether by the *unseen servant* or by the party), Zarrp immediately lays into the PCs with intent to kill. Zarrp's pact restricts him from leaving before all the intruders are slain. To this end, the yugoloth fights to the death and will pursue the violators of the tomb for as long as necessary. If Zarrp succeeds in defending the tomb, he will immediately use his *teleport without error* ability to return home (though he will have to pass beyond the ring of stones to do so). If slain, he simply waits to reform his material body on his home plane. This will take 13 years, but he feels that this is a chance worth taking.

In combat, Zarrp fights with a reckless disregard for his surroundings. He will not go out of his way to destroy the tomb's contents, but neither will he seek to avoid damage. His first act upon being freed will be to seal himself off from the party with a *wall of force* and then surround himself with *darkness.* Zarrp then casts his personal spells on himself (*haste, minor globe of invulnerability, detect invisibility, mirror image,* and *shocking grasp*), *shape changing* into one of the PCs if this might create some confusion. Then the arcanaloth attempts to *gate* in 1-6 mezzoloths to help him destroy the party. Regardless of whether or not the *gate* opens, Zarrp uses his *advanced illusion* spell to create half a dozen mezzoloths. Zarrp then brings down the *wall of force* and *darkness,* and sends the mezzoloths (both real and illusory) into battle.

If the *gate* opens, there is no chance the mezzoloths will turn against Zarrp. Zarrp has already made arrangements with these particular yugoloths. They have agreed to help him carry out his duty to Zathis in exchange for all the magical items and equipment of the PCs they slay.

Mezzoloths: INT low; AL NE; AC −1; MV 15; HD 10+20; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+13/1d6+13 (includes +7 Strength bonus); SA spell-like powers (10th level of ability); SD +1 or better weapons to hit; 120' infravision; immune to acid, poison, paralysis, fire, *charm,* and *suggestion* spells; half damage from gas; MR 50%; SZ M (7'); ML 13; XP 40,500; MC8 (Yugoloth, lesser).

Mezzoloths have the following spells usable once per round, one at a time: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error* (not in Zathis's tomb), *burning hands, cause serious wounds, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, hold person, mirror image, sleep, trip.* They have the innate power to *detect invisibility,* can cast *dispel magic* twice a day, and may cast the following spells each once per day: *cloudkill, flame strike, gate* (40% chance of success for 1-4 mezzoloths or 1-2 hydroloths with statistics as in area 8).

Zarrp will begin combat by filling the room with his *death fog* (he and the mezzoloths are immune to it) and then cast his *confusion* and *chaos* spells on missile-users and spell-casters. He reserves his *hold monster* spell for any obviously powerful PCs (such as those having an easy time with his mezzoloths) or any PCs who appear to be attempting to disbelieve his illusions. If seriously wounded, Zarrp attempts to restore his hit points with his *vampiric touch* and then lets off his *fireball* spell (again, he and his mezzoloths are immune).

If faring poorly, he will either fly to the ceiling (out of reach of the party's melee weapons) or seal himself off with his other *wall of force* spell and become *invisible.* Zarrp then waits for a chance to attack or ambush whoever has proved to be the most potent threat. His other spells can be used as needed.

The mezzoloths prefer melee combat to spell-casting but will not hesitate to cast their deadliest spells (such as *cloudkill* and *flame strike*) before entering battle. They like using their *cause serious wounds* spells to increase their hand-to-hand damage by 3-17 (2d8+1) points (one attack only). If the battle goes poorly, they use their *mirror image* spells to give their opponents more targets.

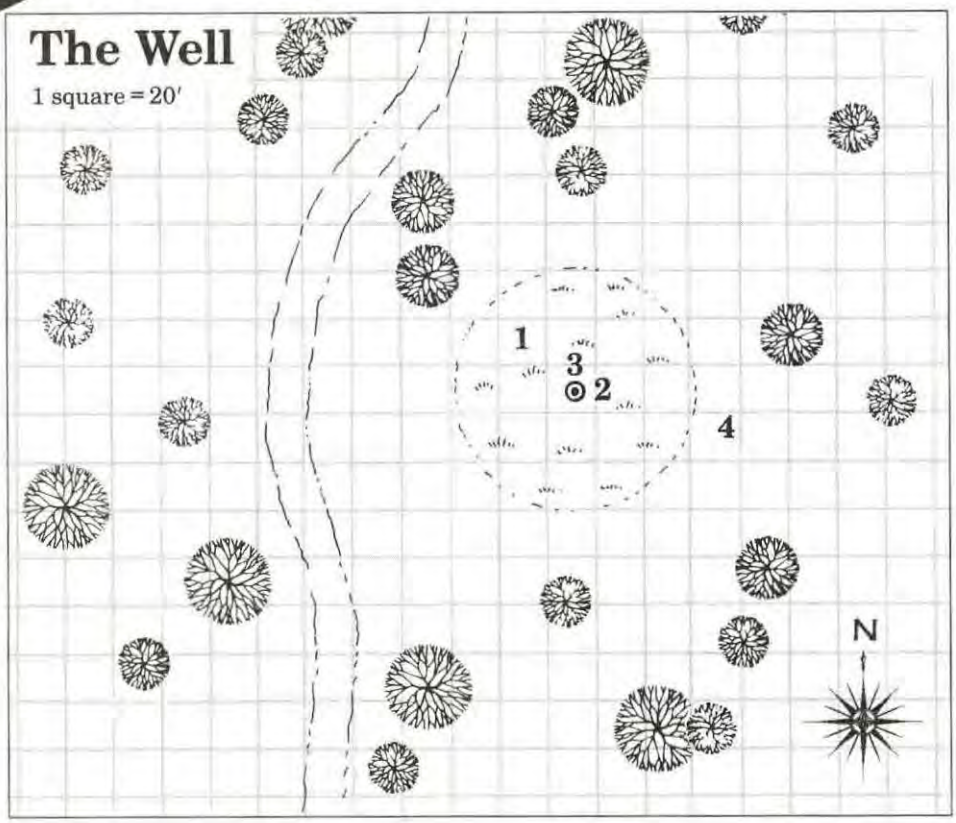
The yugoloths take no prisoners. Incapacitated adventurers will be slain without hesitation when time permits. If Zarrp is captured, he reveals that he was paid to slay the party members. He will even go so far as to tell the PCs about the magic books and scrolls he received, hoping that the adventurers will make a more attractive counter-offer. Zarrp hints that he could be persuaded to switch allegiances, and he will gladly accept whatever the PCs are foolish enough to give him. As soon as he is freed and it is feasible to do so, the arcanaloth continues to execute his original contract by eliminating the PCs. Only slaying Zarrp or forcing him back to his home plane will free him of his duty.

The couch (worth 4,000 gp) matches the armchair on the northeast wall and is similarly enchanted. The book resting on the couch is a detailed study of the various elemental and para-elemental planes. Inscribed within these pages is the ninth-level spell *estate transference.* All the details and requirements for casting this spell are fully described. Zathis referred to this book when he slid his tomb into the plane of elemental Fire. He simply forgot to return the book to the bookcase before taking his final rest. This book could bring up to 10,000 gp if sold to a mage.

The end table is rather ordinary, as is

Continued on page 71

THE WELL



You'll need all your luck at *this* wishing well.

BY ROGER BAKER

This short AD&D® adventure is designed for a party of 4-8 player characters of 2-5 levels of experience (about 20 total levels). Successful completion of this adventure depends on problem solving.

Adventure Background

A little over 10 years ago, Lord Barcus and his Legions of Light repulsed a fearsome assault by the Snake, Bull, and Hawk barbarian hordes, at great cost to the defending forces. Over half of the Legions lay dead around the body of their lord.

Barcus' friend, Talus of Orange, Commander of the Legion of Orange and a conjurer of great skill, built a shrine in the center of the battlefield. Talus wanted everyone who passed this way to remember the heroic deeds of the Legions of Light and praise the name of Lord Barcus.

Constructed of white marble, the shrine contains a small well for the refreshment of travelers. To further reflect his respect for his dead friend, Talus risked casting a *wish* spell, and the *wish* endowed the well with the ability to grant small favors to travelers who gave a gift in Lord Barcus' name. These favors ranged from simple good luck to *limited wishes* (see "Results of Donations" sidebar). The well bestows nothing on those who offer useless items such as rocks or sand. Those who take from the well are cursed by ill luck (see area 3). Some have paid an even greater price for their larceny (see area 4).

Over the past 10 years, grass has slowly covered the broken equipment and bones of the dead warriors. Although nearly erased from sight, the battlefield is still dangerous because of the broken weapons and sharp objects that remain. The shrine rests in the middle of a grassy field, dotted with low bushes and young trees.

Six months ago, an ambitious thief named Marlinus tried to retrieve the treasures that had been left at the shrine. Using a *necklace of adaptation*, he lowered himself to the bottom of the well and gathered some of the trinkets he found.

When Marlinus emerged from the well it was nearly dark. Suddenly, he thought he heard voices approaching from the road. He fled into the darkness, stumbling over the uneven ground. In his headlong dash, he missed his footing and fell, impaling himself on a broken sword blade left from the battle. The weight of his loot drove the shard deep into his chest, and he died instantly. Whether this was a result of the well's influence or simply bad luck, Marlinus never knew. His remains have been undisturbed since that date.

The well's curse has turned Marlinus into a haunt. The thief has tried to get travelers to free him from his undead state by returning his loot to the well. So far, he has been unsuccessful.

Beginning the Adventure

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> While traveling along a deserted section of road in a high mountain pass near dusk, you happen upon a small white shrine. Those who know the area can tell you that the shrine was built about 10 years ago by the conjurer Talus of Orange in remembrance of his friend Lord Barcus, who died defending this pass from the northern barbarian tribes. It is a peaceful spot and offers an excellent place to camp for the night.

OF LORD BARCUS

1. Around the Shrine. The shrine is surrounded by short grass in a 50′ radius; thereafter the natural foliage resumes. The lumpy ground outside this circle is dotted with low bushes, colorful clumps of wildflowers and young trees. The wind within the circle seems weaker and the night chill less biting. It is truly a traveler's sanctuary.

Evidence of recent travelers is abundant. The latest campfire is still slightly warm, and several bits of crockery have been left nearby. A pot of coffee sitting at the edge of the fire has boiled dry. It appears as though whoever was here last night left in a hurry.

2. The Shrine. Built of local marble, the shrine is located in the center of the well-tended circle of grass. It is a simple structure with four solid posts supporting a stone roof. Over the years, this roof has gathered various patches of green and yellow lichen. The 15′ peak of the roof is topped with a copper spike.

3. The Well. Beneath this simple cover stands a well, complete with winch and bucket. The well's rim is made of the same white marble as the shrine and bears stone lettering on the north side that reads:

> Built by Talus of Orange, Conjurer, Captain of the Orange Legion, in memory of his friend Lord Barcus, who fell defending this pass from the barbarian tribes.
>
> The day was won, but the cost was great.
>
> Drink and be refreshed. Give and be rewarded.

On the opposite side of the well, a traveler has written some verses on the white stone with a piece of charcoal.

> Many a traveler will often tell
> Of the luck they found at the wishing well.
> A coin over your shoulder is all you need.
> To your left, to your right, pay no heed.
> The point is to give, for the gift is the key,
> And luck will find you wherever you be.
> But a warning for all who might think to take:
> Resist! Do not! For much is at stake!
> To steal from the well is a quick road to wealth
> That few survive to enjoy in good health.

The contents of the well are obscured by the depth and shadows of the shaft. If the well is investigated, a pile of coins and trinkets can be found at the bottom, 80′ below ground and 20′ below the surface of the water. The collection is less than might be expected from 10 years of offerings: 34 cp, 4 sp, 5 gp, 1 pp, a silver arrowhead, a bronze medallion green with age, a rusty dagger, five glass marbles of various colors, and 38 ordinary rocks. Some corroded copper and silver coins have fused into clumps from their long submersion.

Someone climbed down this shaft not long ago, dislodging moss and disturbing the fragile lichen colonies on the walls. Alert PCs detect these signs as if looking for a secret door.

The scrawled writing refers to the curse that affects those who steal from the well. Thieving PCs will be discouraged by a subtle sense of dread before, during, and after a theft. Guilty PCs suffer a penalty of 2 to all rolls until the curse is negated by a *remove curse* spell by a priest of at least 12th level. Before removing any curse, however, most priests will divine its cause and may require the PC to do some act of penance for his deed.

4. Recent Skeleton. A human skeleton lies 30 yards east of the shrine, face down and partially hidden by grass and wild flowers. The person appears to have impaled himself on a rusty sword left from the battle.

The coins and objects spread among the grass and flowers a few feet to the east of the skeleton are corroded from the elements. Dwarves or PCs with metallurgy or smithing skills will recognize, however, that the corrosion on the coins and objects did not occur in air but in water.

A total of 10 turns are needed to find all the coins and objects in the area (if two people look, it will take five turns; if four people, then two and a half turns). A complete inventory of Marlinus's loot includes 1,128 cp, 275 sp, 35 gp, 5 pp, a 100-gp opal, three small quartz figurines worth 50 gp each, a small statue that resembles a

Continued on page 71

Results of Donations

Results from the well are not affected by the value of the offering. There is a limit of one result per PC, per year. After making an offering, the PC will feel warm all over for a brief moment. Any affected item, including people, radiates a magical aura. A successful *identify* spell reveals the benefit. Benefits marked with an asterisk last for one month.

01-05 Primary weapon glows for 1-10 days.
06-10 Random item turns to pure gold but retains magical properties (if any).
11-15 PC gains ability to fly at MV 1 for one week.
16-20* PC can smell gold at 200 yards.
21-25 Main weapon turns to silver, retains magical properties (if any).
26-30* Armor improves by one type.
31-35 Annoying rock in boot turns out to be 200-gp ruby.
36-40 PC feels energetic; movement permanently increased by 1.
41-45 PC's group travels 50% farther than expected tomorrow.
46-50 Boots never wear out.
51-55* PC gains buoyancy (never sinks).
56-60* Cold-based spells do −1 hp damage to PC.
61-65 One horseshoe on PC's mount turns to gold (not immediately noticed).
66-70 PC becomes 1-4 years younger.
71-75 PC gains ability to play a musical instrument (DM's choice).
76-80* PC tastes bad; monsters bite only 10% of the time after first bite.
81-85 PC can read and write; if already literate, PC gains 150% normal movement speed (for one month).
86-90* Primary weapon signals proximity of random type of monster permanently.
91-92 PC gains infravision on full moon nights.
93-94 PC becomes exceptionally skillful at a nonweapon proficiency (+4 to skill roll)
95-96 PC is owed a nonmonetary favor by a dragon.
97* While worn, armor is weightless.
98 PC becomes lucky; bonus of 1 to all rolls for 1-6 days.
99 One item gains 1-4 charges or +1 enchantment for 1-6 days.
00 PC is granted a *limited wish* (a *magic mouth* explains that the gift must be used within one turn or be lost).

A WAY WITH WORDS

BY TEEUWYNN WOODRUFF AND TIM BEACH

Brutish, yet historically inclined and discreet, adventurers required.

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

Teeuwynn has just bought a house in a pine forest in North Carolina. She shares this home with a paratrooper/lawyer and two cats named Aurora and (aptly!) Monster. She has recently completed the new D&D® DM Screen and module "Escape From Thunder Rift" for TSR. She is currently hard at work on new projects for both TSR and White Wolf Games Studio.

Tim had a promising career in freelance game design for nearly two months before the RPGA™ Network hired him. He worked as the Network's tournament coordinator for eight months before joining TSR's game design staff. Recent projects include FR15 Gold & Glory, City of Delights *for the AL-QADIM™ game, and the AM4 MAGITECH™ supplement to the AMAZING ENGINE™ system. In real life, Tim likes Star Trek, reading, and role-playing thri-kreen.*

"A Way With Words" is a D&D® game adventure designed for 3-6 player characters of levels 1-3 (about 9 total levels). The number and strength of the monsters may be adjusted to compensate for a stronger or weaker party and provide a more balanced adventure. This scenario is intended for beginning players and Dungeon Masters but should be enjoyable for more experienced individuals as well.

The adventure takes place in and near the tiny village of Edgewater, a small town located in Thunder Rift on the northern edge of Lake Ganif, halfway between the city of Melinir and the East Drake River's delta to the Black Swamps. However, the DM may set the adventure in any small town near water and a marshy area.

Although there are some combat encounters, the emphasis here is on role-playing. When running this adventure, the DM should play up the various characters found in Edgewater and the surrounding wilderness. This is an especially good way to encourage beginning PCs to interact with the NPCs and with each other, instead of just killing everything in sight. The wandering monster table in this adventure should be used at the DM's discretion (for example, if the PCs are having too easy a time, or if they are making quite a bit of noise).

Though this is a self-contained adventure, the D&D *Rules Cyclopedia* (*RC*) would be quite helpful. The DM may

also use the stand-up monsters and characters from the D&D game boxed set or the entry level D&D modules.

Two concepts from the *RC* are used throughout this adventure: THAC0 and ability checks. Though these are probably familiar to experienced gamers, a short explanation is offered here.

THAC0 stands for "To Hit Armor Class 0." To determine the roll a monster needs to hit a character with a specific Armor Class, subtract the AC from the monster's THAC0 number. Thus, if a monster's THAC0 is 19 and its target is AC 3, the monster needs to roll a 16 or better to hit.

A PC may be asked to make ability checks in order to perform certain actions. Ability checks are referred to by the name of the relevant ability, such as Dexterity or Intelligence. When an ability check is called for, the player rolls 1d20 and compares the result to his character's ability score. If the number on the die is less than or equal to the ability score, the check is successful. For example, a PC with a Dexterity of 15 must make a Dexterity check to walk a tightrope. The player rolls 1d20. A roll of 15 or less indicates success.

Adventure Background

The famous (at least in his own mind) gnome archaeologist Harfur Glumtoes has spent the past year and more in an attempt to document the historic differences between dwarven and gnomish poetry, and how the two poetic forms diverged over the course of centuries. He had come far in tracing the structural and philosophical differences between the two poetic systems, and thought it would be a relatively simple matter to finish his Very Important Treatise on this Highly Relevant Subject. Soon, Harfur would be able to document where the dwarven system went wrong, and thus why today's dwarven artistic (and intellectual) creations are not up to gnomish standards.

Harfur came to the tiny town of Edgewater 18 months ago for two reasons. He wanted peace and quiet, and he needed to be near the library around which the town was built. The library is the sole known legacy of a group of monks, the Kohlorian Brotherhood, who were dedicated to the preservation of knowledge. Nearing the end of his research, Harfur needed only to copy down a few illustrative verses of early gnomish poetry, and his impeccable (and, in his own opinion, brilliant) research would be complete.

However, when Harfur went to the shelf where he kept the volume of poetry, he found it was gone! Harfur searched his entire house from top to bottom but found no sign of *The Big Book of Sappy, Drivelly Love Poems.* Harfur even searched the town library, in case someone had found his book and brought it there. No such luck.

Harfur thought long and hard about where the book might have gone. Finally, he remembered a young bard who had attended one of his poetry readings only last month. He remembered the woman for three reasons. She had asked whether she could borrow or purchase the poetry book, and she was very pretty. The third reason he remembered her was that she had been the only person to ever attend one of his poetry readings.

Rhiannon the bard had begged, sobbed, and wailed in her efforts to gain the book. Yet, despite her beauty, Harfur had remained firm and adamantly refused to let her borrow the important tome. After all, research is research. Rhiannon was the only person Harfur could think of who might want to steal his book.

Wasting no time, Harfur easily learned the location of Rhiannon's home in the hills just outside of town. Armed with this information, Harfur intrepidly set off to talk to the young bard. However, when he reached Rhiannon's home, he was in for a shock. The young woman was clad in a green gown and an even greener snake, apparently her pet. For most individuals, this would not have been too disconcerting, but Harfur is terrified of snakes. Eyes bulging, Harfur stammered an apology and dashed pell-mell back to the village.

In light of this new information, Harfur has decided that the best course of action would be to hire some adventurers to deal with the bard and her scaly friend. In order to attract adventurers, Harfur has placed large, neatly lettered signs about the town:

> Brutish, yet historically inclined and discreet, adventurers required for a task of some delicacy. Must have at least one literate member. If interested, contact Harfur Glumtoes, Main Street. Second house from left. The green one. With white trim. Or just ask anyone in town and they'll show you.

Wandering Monsters

Roll 1d4 once every six hours. On a roll of 1, the PCs encounter a wandering monster. The DM may also pick an encounter from this table if the party is being very noisy or doing something that might draw unwanted attention.

If a wandering monster is indicated or desired, roll 1d6 and consult the table below.

1. **Giant rats** (4-6): AC 7; HD ½; hp 2; MV 120'(40'), swim 60'(20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d3 plus disease; Save as Normal Man; ML 8; INT 2; AL N; XP 5; RC/201.

Anyone bitten by a rat has a 1-in-20 chance of contracting a disease (a diseased rat is worth 6 XP). The victim may avoid the disease by making a successful saving throw vs. poison. These rats attack as a group, swarming around the PCs.

2. **Kobolds** (3-5): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6−1 (short sword); Save as Normal Man; ML 6; INT 9; AL C; XP 5; RC/187.

These kobolds are members of a different tribe than the kobold "mages." They are looking for treasure and will attempt to ambush the party.

3. **Giant centipedes** (1-4): AC 9; HD ½*; hp 2; MV 60'(20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg poison; Save as Normal Man; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 6; RC/163.

The victim of a centipede's bite must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or become violently ill for the next 10 days (movement is at half speed; the PC is unable to perform any other physical actions). The centipedes swarm out of a decaying log or tree stump to attack the party.

4. **Giant ferret:** AC 5; HD 1+1; hp 8; MV 150'(50'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8; Save as F1; ML 8; INT 2; AL N; XP 15; RC/177.

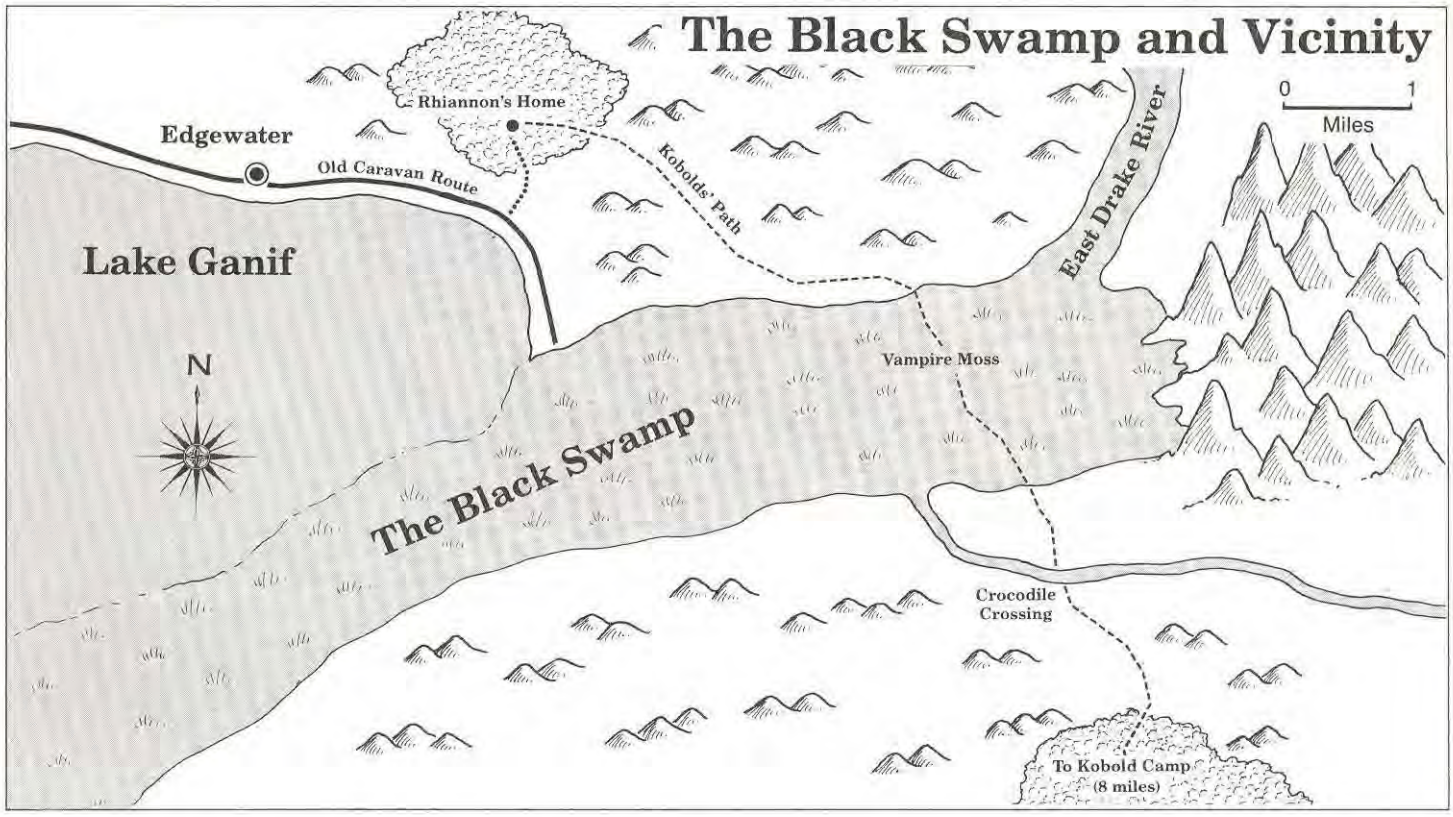
This creature attacks one PC at the rear of the party, hoping for a swift kill.

5. **Goblins** (2-5): AC 6; HD 1−1; hp 4; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 18; Dmg 1-4 (club); Save as Normal Man; ML 7; INT 9; AL C; XP 5; RC/180.

These goblins are looking for gold and will attack the PCs in a fairly organized manner, since they have strong leadership.

6. **Brigands** (2-4): AC 7; HD 1; hp 5; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 8; INT 11; AL C; XP 10; RC/193 (Men).

These brigands wear leather armor and carry short swords. They are simply robbers looking for a quick payoff. If the party appears to be getting the best of them, any bandits still on their feet will flee, leaving their compatriots to the PCs. They have no loyalty whatsoever.



If the adventure starts in the PCs' hometown, Harfur might also come looking for them.

Harfur Glumtoes is devoted to the study of history, language, and general knowledge. An archaeologist, he is a gnome with a penchant for moldy tomes and a weakness for tall women (those over 4' in height). Harfur prides himself on his intellectual prowess, but often becomes absorbed in his projects to the point where he notices nothing else. He can be gruff, but he wants to be friendly and tries to be patient with others.

When Harfur has developed sufficient physical skills, he is determined to go adventuring himself. He is currently working with the short sword and whip. The DM may wish to use Harfur as an NPC in later adventures, encouraging the PCs to accompany him on quests to "save history" (and Harfur!).

For The DUNGEON MASTER™

The bard, Rhiannon, did steal Harfur's book from his house, as she had fallen desperately in love with the verses of poetry in the volume. However, just a few hours ago, a group of kobolds stole the book of poetry from her, believing it to be a spell book.

The thieving kobolds learned to read and write Common this past winter. The creatures captured a thief who was busy escaping from a merchant caravan he had just robbed. As the kobolds were preparing to kill the thief, the clever (and desperate) man told the band he knew how to read magic and would teach the kobolds if they would let him go. After a short conference, the kobolds decided to take the thief up on his offer.

The man proceeded to teach the kobolds Common, as he did not really know how to read magic. Luckily for the thief, the kobolds could not tell the difference. The kobolds freed him once they had learned to read and write, and he hastily left the area.

The kobolds are currently taking the stolen book of poetry back to their small encampment where some of their fellows wait, about a day's hard journey from Rhiannon's home. There they plan on having a celebration and magic demonstration before making a journey of several more days back to their home clan. The PCs should catch up to the kobolds shortly after the little creatures reach their temporary encampment.

Harfur's Offer

It is indeed a very simple matter to locate Harfur's green house with white trim. If the PCs ask any of the townspeople, they will point the way to the gnome's residence. This is a small town, and most of the residents know each other. If any of the PCs are from the town (and have been around during the past 18 months), they will have heard of Harfur and know where he lives.

Harfur's recently whitewashed door has two doorknobs set into it. The first appears to be placed for the comfort of humans, while the second has been placed more appropriately for halflings or gnomes.

When the PCs knock on the door, they hear a high-pitched voice call out "Egad!" This cry is followed by several loud thumps.

Harfur was attempting to change the candles in his chandelier. In order to reach that high, Harfur climbed atop one of the piles of books and papers cluttering his home. Unfortunately for Harfur, the pile slipped out from under him, causing the loud thumps mentioned above. Harfur managed to avoid falling with the pile of books, but is just

barely hanging on to his chandelier.

If the PCs attempt to open the door, they find it is not locked. If they call out to Harfur or do not open the door within a few seconds, they hear a variety of noises from inside the dwelling, such as "Uhh . . . Aaack! . . . Ooch! . . . Gahh!" etc. If this does not move the PCs, the next round they hear another thump (caused by Harfur falling to the floor). Harfur then opens the door and regards the PCs with hostility. It will take some soothing before the aching gnome will agree to offer the PCs the job.

If the PCs open the door before Harfur falls, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As the door opens, you behold piles of documents, books, and scrolls of every type scattered in apparently random fashion about the large room. Some of the piles stand 4′ high, and a few seem to be on the verge of collapse. In fact, the loud noises you just heard seem to have been caused by the collapse of one of the larger stacks.
>
> Even more unusual than the materials filling the dwelling is the small gnome swinging back and forth from a large chandelier. He appears to be losing his grip and may fall at any second.

Harfur will indeed fall shortly. The PCs have only one round in which to act. If they do not do something, Harfur takes 1-3 hp falling damage. Any human-size or larger character can grab Harfur and help him down. If a PC attempts to catch Harfur as he falls, the PC must make a successful Dexterity check or take 1-2 hp damage when Harfur lands on his rescuer.

As long as the PCs attempt to help him, Harfur will be very happy to offer them the job. This is especially true if the PCs also aid him in restoring the fallen pile of books and scrolls. Harfur will be very fussy while arranging the pile, since he wants his orderly disorder to be "just so."

Once "order" has been restored, Harfur leads the PCs to a small table. There are enough chairs for all the PCs, but they are all sized for gnomes. Harfur offers the group tea, in tiny cups. The gnome will be especially nice to any "tall" female PCs in the party.

Once tea has been distributed or refused, Harfur explains the task he has in mind for the party. The gnome has a stodgy and scholarly manner, at odds with his high-pitched voice.

> "The task I am proposing for you is one of great, perhaps even monumental, historical significance. For the past year and more, I have been tracing the linguistic roots of dwarven and gnomish poetry systems back to the time when they were one and the same. I am on the verge of completing my research, but one thing prevents the completion of this important work.
>
> "A volume entitled *The Big Book of Sappy, Drivelly Love Poems*, an early gnomish collection, was taken from my home sometime within the past month. I believe that a young woman by the name of Rhiannon stole the compilation. You see, she came to my poetry reading last month and begged me to lend her the volume. She even cried! I was tempted but held firm. Even lovely, young, tall women must not come between me and my research.
>
> "In any case, the young woman is a bard who lives not far from town. Did I mention she is very tall? Easily 5′2″. I am certain if you just reason with her, she will return the volume. However, if she becomes obstreperous, you might have to resort to force, distasteful as that might be. Try not to hurt her too much though, if it should come to violence.
>
> "If, by some chance, she should not be in possession of the tome, you must locate it as quickly as possible."
>
> Harfur's eyes glitter as he leans forward and whispers:
>
> "This will probably be the single most important mission you have ever taken on. Nothing is more important than knowledge!"
>
> Harfur leans back and sips his tea as he regards you steadily from behind wire spectacles. "Well, what do you say? Are you interested?"

Harfur will be happy to give the party what little information he possesses on Rhiannon. If they ask the gnome about other people who attended his poetry readings and might have stolen the tome, Harfur squirms a bit before telling them there were no other attendees. He hastily explains the lack of attendees as due to the "paucity of cultural values assimilated by current audiences."

If the party asks why Harfur doesn't go to see Rhiannon himself, since her home is so close, he goes a bit pale and stammers that he is "allergic to . . . trees . . . and I don't go into the woods much." Harfur does not wish to inform anyone of his crippling fear of snakes, and admits to it only if pressed.

If the party expresses interest in the mission, Harfur will be very happy and will immediately offer them more tea. If the PCs ask about payment, he appears befuddled for a moment before excusing himself. The gnome climbs a small ladder that apparently leads to an upper area. The party hears clattering noises and mumbled curses, and eventually gold pieces and a few small garnets begin to drop from above. Harfur pokes his head through the trapdoor and asks if "that will suffice?" He tells the PCs that they can keep anything else they find while on their mission. He is interested only in the book. All told, Harfur offers the PCs the equivalent of 40 gp each.

If the party gives Harfur a hard time about the payment, he grudgingly offers them a small platinum statue of a unicorn that can be sold for 75 gp. If the PCs did not aid Harfur when he was in trouble nor help him with the fallen stack of books and papers, he will not offer them the statue.

Once the group has accepted the job, Harfur explains how to get to Rhiannon's home. The way is simple; just follow the old caravan route east out of town. After they have gone almost a mile, the PCs will see a small trail leading off to the left. The bard's home is a few hundred yards up the trail.

Harfur Glumtoes: AC 5; HD 2; hp 6; MV 60′(20′); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg by weapon type; I 16, W 8; Save as Dwarf 1; ML 8; AL L. Harfur has both a whip (1-2 hp) and a short sword (1-6 hp).

Rhiannon

Unless the DM wishes to add a wandering monster encounter, the journey to Rhiannon's home is without incident. The bard's home is circular and made of wood. It seems to have been built around a large oak tree that rises gracefully from the center of the dwelling.

If the PCs knock on the door or call out, Rhiannon will answer. The bard is a lovely human woman with blonde hair and green eyes. She wears a jade green silk gown, and her pet snake, Cassandra, is wrapped about her waist.

Cassandra is a pit viper approximately 5′ long. The snake will attack only if Rhiannon is harmed.

When the PCs come upon Rhiannon, she has been crying and sniffling into a green silk handkerchief. This is not uncommon for her because she enjoys tragedy. Rhiannon becomes teary eyed at the slightest provocation, searching out misery, or even the possibility of a tragic situation, whenever possible. Often while crying she will begin to smile or laugh, a rather disconcerting habit.

This love of tragedy has unfortunately caused Rhiannon to have a rather limited audience. Her songs are just too depressing for most people. She is particularly enamored of doomed love affairs.

When Rhiannon answers the door she looks hopeful, although her face is tear streaked. She immediately asks the group if they have her book. If the PCs do not respond or respond negatively, Rhiannon bursts into sobs, and Cassandra hisses at them. If any of the adventurers ask her about the book of poetry or why she is crying, Rhiannon tells the PCs that one of her dearest possessions has been stolen.

If the PCs confront her with Harfur's accusations about the stolen book, Rhiannon begins sobbing even harder. She runs inside her home without bothering to shut the door and collapses onto a pile of pillows.

As long as the PCs are not too threatening or mean, Rhiannon eventually invites them into her home. It is a cozy dwelling, with pillows strewn casually about the floor. The warm effect is slightly marred by depressing paintings, the most prominent of which depicts a woman weeping as her husband is dragged to the gallows.

Once they are inside, Rhiannon will answer the PCs' questions. She readily admits to having "borrowed" the gnome's book of poetry. The bard defends her actions by saying she was only "rescuing the book" from Harfur, "who does not have the artistic sensitivity necessary to truly appreciate such deep works."

If the PCs ask Rhiannon for the book, she tells them about the tragic theft of her new possession. It seems the prized tome has been stolen by a group of kobolds. She is not sure why they wanted the book, as "everyone knows kobolds have no artistic sensitivity whatsoever."

Rhiannon had set her book down on a rock and gone inside to fetch her handkerchief, since she had just come to a particularly sad section of poems. By the time she returned, the kobolds were running off with the book. She is sure they could not have gone far, because this tragic incident occurred only a few hours ago.

The young woman can point out the trail along which the kobolds fled, and she tearfully appeals to the party to return the book to her. Rhiannon even offers the group up to 10 gp each for the opportunity to copy a few of the poems.

If the PCs attack Rhiannon, both she and her snake will fight. However, Rhiannon snatches any opportunity to flee or surrender, throwing herself on the party member she thinks is most likely to aid her in her time of need.

Rhiannon: AC 7; Normal Human; hp 4; MV 120′(40′); #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon type; DEX 16; Save as Normal Human; ML 9; AL N.

Rhiannon has 60 gp and a short sword (1-6 hp). She wears no armor; her low armor class is due to her high Dexterity.

Pit viper: AC 6; HD 2*; hp 11; MV 90(30′); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d4 plus poison; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 2; AL N; XP 25; RC/204 (Snake).

Pursuit

The party will have no trouble following the kobolds' trail. The DM should occasionally tell the PCs that they have found something along the path, such as a poorly painted star or a few pieces of glitter. In their haste and excitement, the kobolds have dropped bits and pieces of the numerous strange items they carry and wear, and which they believe to be magical.

When the party reaches the northern edge of the Black Swamp, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Until this point, your journey has been relatively easy. You have now reached the edge of what appears to be a very marshy area. The ground here is extremely spongy, and your feet sink an inch or two into the muck as you survey the land in front of you. For a swamp, there are quite a few trees, mostly pines and small oaks. Pale green moss, some specimens almost 3′ long, hangs from almost every branch. Small patches of dark water, replete with old logs and branches, are scattered throughout, and the stagnant odor of rotting vegetation fills your lungs. A faintly visible animal trail snakes off to the south, marked by a brightly painted feather that lies a few yards down the path.

The feather was dropped by one of the kobolds. The only possible way to cross this swampy area is to stay on the animal path. The caravan trail that once traversed the swamp is no longer passable. If the party attempts to cross the marsh anywhere else, the PCs will soon become hopelessly bogged down, taking over an hour to traverse even a quarter of a mile. Even the animal trail is treacherous, and it takes great concentration to keep from tripping or wandering off the narrow path. While on the trail, the party must travel in single file, and movement is at half the normal rate.

This fetid marsh is home to many creatures, most of which are quite harmless and avoid intruders. As the PCs slowly cross the marsh, the DM should describe the foreboding environment. Strange noises echo between the trees, and birds burst from cover in nearby bushes. The group might catch a glimpse of a large alligator silently swimming away, or see a giant python basking in the sun's warmth high above their heads.

The real danger to the party is not so conspicuous. Four specimens of vampire moss (see sidebar) hang near the path. This vegetation senses the PCs' presence and immediately begins an insidious attack. When the PCs have gone a little more than halfway through the marsh, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you slowly make your way along the marshy path, you are forced to concentrate on every step, for vines and branches are everywhere. Plodding along, you begin to feel very tired, and the backs of your heads tingle. Perhaps you have been exerting yourselves too hard, or maybe you've been breathing swamp gas?

The tingling effect is from the subtle attack of the vampire moss. Each of the four mosses may attack one PC. If there are five or more PCs in the party, the mosses attacks the first four PCs to

come into range. If there are fewer than four PCs, two specimens of moss may attack a single victim. When the vampire moss attacks, ask the first four PCs to make Constitution checks. PCs who fail their checks take 1 hp damage and feel even dizzier because the moss has drained their life force.

After the first Constitution check, the DM should ask the players what their characters are doing. If they are examining the area closely, inform the PCs that some of the hanging moss appears exceptionally healthy and green, but there seems to be nothing out of the ordinary here. If the party attempts to travel at a pace faster than a slow walk, the PCs must make Dexterity checks every round or trip and fall into the surrounding mire. In any case, it takes the party three rounds to move out of the area of effect of the vampire moss.

For every round the PCs stay in the area of effect, unaffected PCs being attacked must make Constitution checks. All affected PCs lose 1 hp per round. Once a PC has lost more than half his maximum hit points, he must make a Constitution check each round to stay conscious. Any PC reduced to 0 hp by the moss will die.

For every round the PCs stay in the vampire moss's area, the moss turns a brighter shade of green. If the PCs do not notice the moss by the third round, they may notice it with successful Intelligence checks.

Destroying the moss is fairly simple; all the PCs need do is rip it apart. This does not permanently destroy the moss, as it can grow back, but it does prevent the moss from draining the adventurers' life forces. To permanently destroy the moss, the party must burn it or rip it into tiny shreds.

Once the PCs have either defeated the vampire moss or escaped the area of its effect, they will have no more problems in the marsh.

By the time the PCs make it through the marsh, the sun is setting. There are several likely places to make camp in the area. If the PCs try to push on past sundown, the DM should warn them that it is extremely difficult to track the kobolds in the dark. If they insist on continuing, have the PCs meet a wandering monster or two. In any case, the PCs should not catch up with the kobolds the first night.

Crocodile Crossing

The next morning, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You have left the dangerous marsh behind and seem to be making good progress. The ground here is far less sodden than what you covered yesterday. However, you now stand before a large stream, perhaps 15' across and 3' deep. Broadleaf trees shade the trail, providing relief from the day's warmth. Several logs rest in the river, although none quite spans the channel. Several clumps of flour and glitter are scattered on the far side of the stream, as if someone had been hurling packets of the stuff.

The kobolds used packets of "magic glitter" (mica chips) and flour to attack the crocodiles that live in the river. When, in spite of their "spell-casting," two of their group became breakfast for the hungry reptiles, the kobolds decided that the crocodiles must have some special magical protection. The rest of the band promptly fled the dangerous "crocodile mages."

If the PCs ask about the logs, the DM should inform them that it may be possible to cross the river by hopping from log to log, since they are quite close together. Clever PCs may attempt to determine if the logs are crocodiles. If the players state that the PCs examine the logs closely, the DM should look puzzled and ask which log they are examining. The nearest log is just a log, but the two middle "logs" are indeed crocodiles.

Roll Intelligence checks for the PCs, no matter which log (or logs) they examine. If a PC is looking at one of the crocodiles and makes his check, the PC notices something odd about the log but is unable to determine exactly what is wrong. If the PC fails the check or is looking at a real log, the DM should tell the PC that it looks like an ordinary log.

Any PC attempting to jump from log to log must make a Dexterity check or land in the water. A successful check carries the PC to the second "log" (a crocodile). Here the PC must make another Dexterity check as the crocodile rolls over to attack the hapless adventurer. If the check succeeds, the PC may attack normally; otherwise, the PC is surprised and may not attack until the second round of combat.

Vampire Moss

Armor Class:	9
Hit Dice:	½ (1-4 hp)
Move:	Nil
Attacks:	1 (special)
Damage:	1 hp per round
No. Appearing:	1-6 (1-6)
Save as:	Wizard 1
Morale:	9
Treasure Type:	Nil
Intelligence:	0
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	7

Monster Type: Lowlife (Rare).

Vampire moss hangs from trees and branches in marshy or tropical environments. It is normally pale green in color, and from 1'-4' in length. The moss grows in a netlike mass but is not as thick as rock-dwelling moss.

Vampire moss lives off the life energy of other creatures, although it prefers mammals. The moss is an "air feeder," requiring no contact with the creatures that it draws energy from. However, victims must be within 10 yards of the moss. A vampire moss feeds on the life energies of nearby trees only if it is starving to death.

When vampire moss attempts to feed on a PC, the victim feels a prickling sensation at the back the neck and must make a Constitution check. If the check succeeds, the moss continues to try to magically attach itself until the intended victim leaves its area of effect. If the victim fails the Constitution check, the moss has "latched on" to the PC and begins feeding at the rate of 1 hp per round until the victim dies or leaves the area. When the moss has consumed four times its own hit points in energy, it is sated and releases its victim.

When a victim is reduced to half his maximum number of hit points, he must make another Constitution check or fall unconscious. The victim must continue to make checks each round until the draining stops or the victim falls unconscious. The victim dies when reduced to 0 hp.

As the moss feeds, it turns a brighter and brighter shade of green. A fully sated moss is a vivid emerald green.

The only ways to kill vampire moss are by ripping it into tiny shreds or burning it. The moss regenerate all other damage at a rate of 2 hp per week.

Terrain: Swamp, Woods (tropical).

These crocodiles are hungry and do not appreciate being disturbed. As soon as the PCs attempt to ford the river, the crocodiles attack, hoping for surprise. Unless the party flies or levitates, or moves a substantial distance up- or downstream (at least half a mile), the crocodiles will drift behind and attack when the party enters the water.

Any items the PCs drop while in the water will either sink or float rapidly downstream. Halflings and dwarves fight at a −2 penalty to attack rolls while in the water, due to its depth and their short stature.

The number of crocodiles found in the stream may be changed to compensate for the relative strength or weakness of the adventuring party.

Crocodiles (2): AC 5; HD 2; hp 8; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 2; AL N; XP 20; RC/164.

Poetic License

By mid-afternoon, the PCs notice a column of smoke in the distance. If the PCs ask about this, the DM can say that it looks as if it comes from a large chimney or bonfire.

It takes the PCs the rest of the afternoon to reach the area near the column of smoke. Shortly before sundown, they should decide how they wish to approach the spot.

Scouting is easy, since most of the kobolds are busy preparing for tonight's celebration and magic demonstration. As long as the PCs take reasonable precautions (sneaking quietly, not wearing bright colors), they are not spotted by the busy kobolds. If the kobolds spot the adventurers, the creatures frantically mobilize and attack the party as discussed later.

If the PCs make a reasonable effort at scouting the small encampment, the DM may give them a rough version of the "Kobold Camp" map, omitting the locations of specific kobolds. Instead, the DM should tell the PCs they see "at least half a dozen" kobolds walking about the camp. The positions of the kobolds on the map show the DM where the kobolds are when the PCs begin their attack (or when the kobolds first notice the party).

The smoke that drew the PCs here comes from a large bonfire that the kobolds have constructed in preparation for the evening's celebration. The kobolds are celebrating the discovery of a mage's spell book, which is actually *The Big Book of Sappy, Drivelly Love Poems*. However, the kobolds believe the ridiculous verses are spells. After all, what else could anything this strange be?

Currently, the most intelligent and cunning kobolds are working on memorizing "spells" from the book. They plan on demonstrating their magical expertise this evening.

As long as the PCs have made an attempt at being quiet and have a reasonable plan for approaching the kobolds, the creatures will not notice the intruders until the party strikes. When the PCs have decided on a plan and are ready to move on the kobolds' encampment, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you close on the camp, you hear snorting and hissing. One scratchy voice is reciting some sort of poetry . . . if you want to call it that.

If the PCs move a bit closer, they can see nine small reptilian creatures with tiny horns and longish snouts. The little monsters look as though they are put-

ting on a pageant. Several of the kobolds wear makeshift robes with strange symbols sloppily painted on them. Some wear feathers in their hair, behind their ears, and on their fingers. Two have small sticks that have apparently been dipped into paint. A kobold reading from a large book wears a floppy baker's hat covered in golden glitter, with large eyes painted all over it. This kobold, who calls himself The Great Whizzo, is the leader of the small band.

The Great Whizzo is currently reading from *The Big Book of Sappy, Drivelly Love Poems.* The PCs may listen for as long as they wish (or as long as they can stand it).

> "Oh! Thou art as the light of dawn,
> Stirring my blood
> Till thou art gone.
> Burning away the morning mist,
> Steal my breath,
> With your sweetest kiss.
> Cast your spell
> *[Here, the kobolds all gasp and clap]*
> Till I am too weak to stand.
> A puppet, yours to quell."

There are nine kobolds standing about the small clearing. They are all enraptured by the "spell book" they have cleverly stolen, because the kobolds all wish to have "Tongues like daggers/And eyes of flame," as one of the poems promises. The entire group is certain this book is a powerful magical tome.

If the PCs immediately attack, the kobolds launch a furious counterattack. The creatures are certain that the party is here to take the "spell book" from them, and they are determined to keep it. The kobolds' strategy is described later.

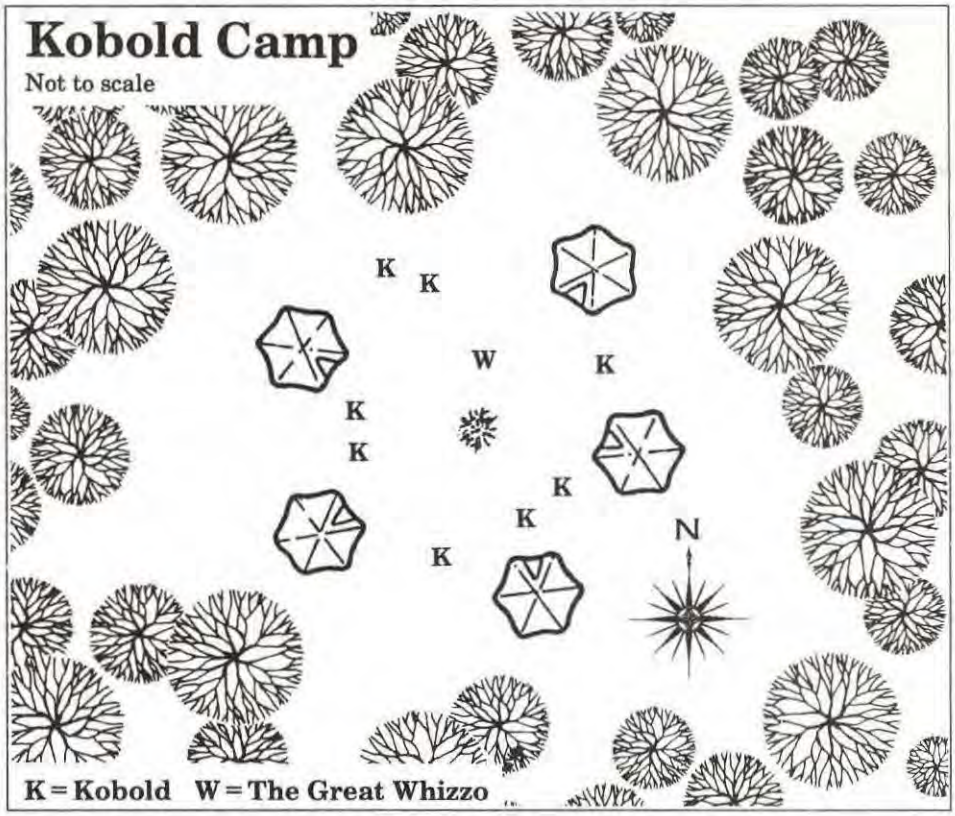
If the PCs approach the kobolds more cautiously instead of leaping into battle, the crafty creatures will attempt to talk to the PCs. During the conversation, the kobolds try to cast spells on the PCs by spouting lines of poetry. Some examples of their "spell selection" are:

"Tempt me not/Lest I drown thee within mine eyes of blue, fair one."

"If I thought that/The very earth should tremble about me," and

"But one kiss/And thou art mine!" (An enterprising kobold might even attempt to kiss one of the PCs at this point.)

The kobolds also chant certain mnemonic teaching devices used by the thief, because they believe these to be very powerful magical charms. Examples of these include "I before E except after C or when sounding like 'A' as in neighbor or weigh," and "Kobold is spelled with a 'K' just like kennel or keg."



The kobolds refuse to answer any questions on how they learned "magic" (Common) and attempt to get into good positions for attacking the PCs. As soon as the kobolds believe they are in the best positions possible, they fall upon the PCs. The kobolds are armed with short swords and usually attack with them. However, each kobold also has two packets of "magic powder" (glitter dust made of mica and sand) that they will also try to hurl at the PCs while shouting "spells." If a kobold manages to hit a PC with a packet of glitter dust, the PC must save vs. paralyzation or be blinded for 1-3 rounds. A blinded PC suffers a −4 penalty to all attack rolls.

Throughout the fight, the kobolds shout "spells" at the PCs. For example:

"Homicide!? Foul, brutish beast,"

"Feel my wrath/Like a scalding bath," and

"Thine eyes weep/Like two rivers deep."

The DM should feel free to make up any atrocious variants of his own.

Kobolds (8): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3; MV 90′(30′); #AT 1 weapon or "spell"; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 − 1 (short sword); Save as Normal Man; ML 8; INT 9; AL C; XP 5; RC/187.

The Great Whizzo: AC 6; HD 1; hp 6; ML 10; XP 10; other statistics as for kobolds, above.

In addition to the book of poetry, the kobolds have 250 cp, 120 sp, and 6 gp hidden under some blankets in the northernmost tent. Each kobold also has two packs of glitter dust. The PCs may take any unused packets, which they may find useful for blinding opponents. The packets have the same throwing range as a dagger.

The Great Whizzo wears three rings. Two of these are made of colored twine wrapped around thin twigs, but the third ring is actually a *ring of protection +1* (which explains the Great Whizzo's armor class of 6). The ring is wrapped in colored twine, so the PCs will have to unwrap it to discover the plain silver band beneath.

Continued on page 71

MAMMOTH PROBLEMS

BY LAWRENCE M. KAPTURE

Marooned in the void, and dead to boot.

Artwork by Bob Klasnich

Lawrence is a foolish man who lives near Detroit. He likes fairy tales, movies, and the works of Kurt Vonnegut and Clive Barker. He can't sit still and fiddles too much, so a lot of extra energy goes into making things up.

"Mammoth Problems" is an AD&D® game SPELLJAMMER® adventure for 4-6 player characters of levels 8-10 (about 45 total levels). A priest who can turn undead would be useful, and each warrior should have at least one magical weapon. Because this adventure does not include a lengthy introduction or explicit setting, it can be placed anywhere in a spelljamming environment with no modifications.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

For the ogre fleet, one of the crowning glories of the first Unhuman War was the career of the *Dark Oliphant,* an ogre mammoth built of ironwood and run by five ogre magi in an experimental series major helm. Cruel and unrelenting, the *Dark Oliphant* was the scourge of the void long after the Unhuman War ended. The *Dark Oliphant* met and destroyed a score of elvish battleships, and was able to singlehandedly destroy twice its tonnage in armadas.

It was during one such conflict that a desperate elven mage *teleported* onto the *Dark Oliphant*'s bridge with a large barrel of smoke powder and ignited it. The resulting explosion destroyed the series helm and allowed the surviving elves to mop up the remaining ogres, retrieve their own survivors, and limp back to base, where the tale ends for the elves.

The ogre magi helmsmen, however, lived on in the hulk of their former command. Dying violently in the experimental helm turned most of them into spiritjams, the evil ghosts of slain spelljamming wizards.

Only one of the ogre magi escaped the fate of his fellows. Gamminole, an ogre mage so potent he had gained wizard abilities, was wearing an *amulet of life protection* at the time of his death. While his compatriots haunt the *Dark Oliphant*'s hulk, Gamminole's powerful psyche has kept him alive in the enchanted crystal for 300 years. (An alternate explanation: The magical residue that created the *Dark Oliphant*'s spiritjams couldn't affect Gamminole's magically preserved soul, so the residue

formed a circuit with the amulet. This connection can only be broken when either the amulet or Gamminole's soul is destroyed.)

Gamminole has learned how to send his psyche forth from the amulet in an immaterial form, much like a weak version of the wizard spell *project image.* He has also learned how to *dominate* living creatures and make them his servants (as the fifth-level wizard spell).

The other ogre magi—Metsalix, Corvaad, Mucklgun, and Dakanan—each reacted differently to their new undead status. Mucklgun retreated to sulk in the cargo hold. Dakanan set up traps all about the wreck, to make sure that he could satiate his constant hunger. Metsalix took to waiting and watching, and Corvaad wanders the *Dark Oliphant*'s decks and corridors looking for victims, hoping for unwitting explorers to stumble onto the hulk. None of them has remained entirely sane.

The spiritjams met Gamminole's projected image during one of his many investigations of the *Oliphant*'s wreck. When Gamminole explained that he was not a ghost, like themselves, the spiritjams responded with the undeads' common reaction to the living: hatred.

Never realizing Gamminole's connection to the magical amulet, the spiritjams hunted everywhere for their former leader's hiding place. Gamminole wasn't too thrilled with their search and decided to leave the *Dark Oliphant* before it was too late. He formulated a plan for escaping his hunters by tricking any passerby into setting him free and destroying the spiritjams at the same time.

For long years, the *Dark Oliphant* has floated alone and directionless in the void. Merchants, novice adventurers, and even a curious tribe of xvarts have run across the ship at various times, but none lived to tell the tale. Gamminole uses these investigators as pawns against the spiritjams. So far, all of his would-be saviors have failed, overwhelmed by the ghostly ogre magi. Those who fled back to their ships often found that the crews they had left behind had been murdered by the malicious spiritjams.

The Ogre Magi

Over the centuries, the living and the undead ogre magi have grown to hate each other to the exclusion of all else. Though they plot each other's downfall, they lead very separate existences, rarely crossing paths. The spiritjams barely speak to each other, but their hatred of Gamminole and their fear of his attempts to destroy them drives them together.

All of the spiritjams value their own existences above all, and they flee combat if brought within 20 hp of annihilation. The only exception to this rule is in the resting place of their corpses (area 9). Here, the spiritjams will fight to their own destruction to protect their ties to the material world.

Spiritjams are the souls of creatures killed while spelljamming. Spiritjams form when the magical connections that bind a helmsman to the ship's helm fail to release upon his death, trapping an evil soul on the Prime Material plane. Usually this creates undead that can wander great distances.

However, unlike most spiritjams, the ogre magi are tied to the wreck of the *Oliphant* by their bodies on the helms. Because of the experimental spells used to create the series major helm, the ogre magi became weak spiritjams, similar to spectres. They can leave the wreck to board nearby ships but can never go more than 1,500 yards from the *Dark Oliphant.* Like a spectre, an ogre mage spiritjam is destroyed if a *raise dead* spell is cast on its corpse.

The ogre magi spiritjams resemble ethereal ogre magi with elongated clawed fingers. Their hair is a cloudy mist surrounding their heads, and their eyes sparkle like stars. Because spiritjams retain the spell-casting abilities they had in life, each ogre mage spiritjam can become *invisible,* cause *darkness,* and *change self* at will. Once per day each can cast *charm person, sleep,* and *cone of cold.* Their *gaseous form, flight,* and *regeneration* abilities do not carry over to spirit form, and the *polymorph* ability now acts as a *change self* spell because a spiritjam cannot use the physical abilities of an adopted form. Spiritjams also have a gaze weapon: any creature that looks into their eyes must save vs. petrification or be paralyzed with fear for 1-4 rounds.

Spiritjams (4): INT exceptional; AL LE; AC 0; MV fly 24 (E); HD 10; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8; SA drain 1-3 points of Intelligence per attack, spells, gaze attack; SD +1 edged weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ M; ML 16; XP 13,000; MC7.

Corvaad, the "Black Assassin" (hp 72) was one of the most fearsome warriors in the ogre fleet. In death he misses the thrill of bloody combat and roams the decks of the *Oliphant* seeking worthy opponents. Though he always seeks out the sounds of a battle anywhere on the ship, he also might simply blunder into the PCs. Corvaad is a loose end, and the DM should feel free to place him anywhere to add to the adventure's challenge. Corvaad enjoys attacking with his claws and uses his spell abilities only to cover a retreat.

Dakanan (hp 47) was a mediocre warrior but a great commander. In life he enjoyed fine foods and liqueurs, and in death he is a glutton for the intelligence of sentient creatures. He sets traps for the looters and adventurers that sometimes brave the wreck, checking them every day for fear of losing a meal to the other spiritjams. He spends the rest of his time in his quarters, mourning the bones of his dead pet polar bear. He uses *darkness, sleep,* or *charm person* to confuse victims and lure them into the ghastly touch of his claws.

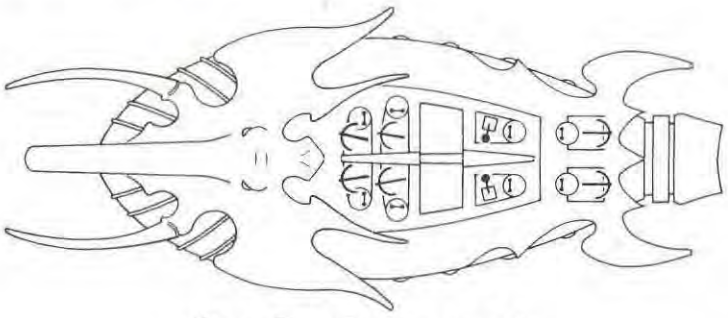
Metsalix (hp 44) was the quietest of the five ogre magi. He was also the most consumed by hate for those who wronged him, most especially elves. In undeath he broods constantly on revenge, but he has also developed the patience to wait for opportunities. He hates Gamminole just slightly more than he hates elves.

Soon after his conversion, Metsalix took to standing on the weapons deck and watching the void for elven ships that he might lure to the *Dark Oliphant.* The adventures can spot him there when they first sight the *Dark Oliphant* (see "The Wreck").

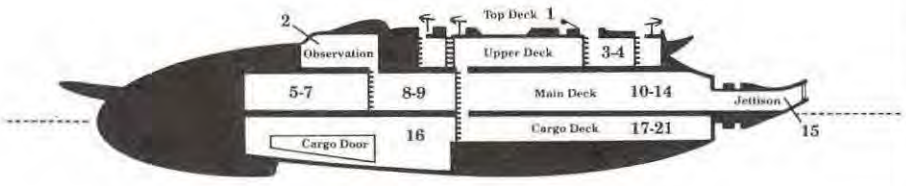
Metsalix follows adventurers, *invisibly* and in the walls, from the upper decks of the *Oliphant* until they find Gamminole's hiding spot. He will attack only if he can destroy Gamminole or if his own corpse is in danger. Otherwise, he remains hidden and watchful. He always attacks elves first, using his spells to sow as much confusion as possible.

Mucklgun (hp 37) was a scrawny, sulky ogre mage in life. As an undead, he hides in the cargo bay among huge piles of bones. He obsessively collects bones from all over the ship and takes them back to his lair, where he animates them using an *amulet of undead*

The *Dark Oliphant*



Top Deck (Area 1)



Side View

animation that rests on his corpse. He can call on the amulet's powers from a distance through the arcane connection that binds the spiritjams to the *Dark Oliphant.*

Gamminole is not undead. Before he was trapped in his *amulet of life protection,* he achieved 3rd level as a multiclassed priest/mage (in addition to his spell-like powers). Now he has no physical form, but over the years his strong psyche has learned a few tricks.

Gamminole learned a form of psychic *domination* after years of this ghostly imprisonment, and this allows him to control others at a distance, as per the 5th-level wizard spell (but only once per day). He can also release his mind from the amulet in a form very similar to the 6th-level wizard spell *project image.* This creates an immaterial duplicate of him within 50 yards of his *amulet of life protection;* he can control this duplicate as he wishes. Gamminole can change his psychic form to play on viewers' sympathies, and will appear in a form that viewers trust (see area 3). However, he cannot use most of his spell-like powers through this image. The exception is *domination,* also a psychic power.

The Ecology of a Space Hulk

In the months after the elves abandoned the *Dark Oliphant* to the void, life flourished. Numerous ogrish and elven corpses fed the most common stowaway in wildspace: giant rats. The boom in the giant rat population supplied food for another group of stowaways on the mammoth: giant spiders. The rot and corruption provided rich nourishment for spores lingering in the air envelope from a hundred worlds that the *Dark Oliphant* had visited or raided. Fungi, slimes, smuts, lichens, molds, mosses, and even some ferns established a permanent foothold in the tiny developing ecosystem.

When the food ran out, the rats began to feed on each other, then on the spiders. Though it became a stark life of struggle, even for a rat, the hardy scavengers adapted, though in time the spiders began feeding on the rats as well. The plants and fungi sank roots into the crumbling wooden decks and provided air, nourished by rat and spider droppings. After much death, the *Dark Oliphant* settled into its current ecosystem, disrupted only occasionally by bored undead.

Explorers in the *Dark Oliphant* find fungi everywhere. The corridors and floors are overgrown with lichens and shelf fungus, and mushrooms grow in the corners of the dim lower decks.

The *Dark Oliphant*'s air envelope is about half normal size because so many creatures breathe it and so little plant life is available to replenish it. Instead of being three times the ship's keel length, the envelope extends only about 85′ off the bow and stern and 50′ to port and starboard. The air envelope is permanently fouled, so explorers suffer −2 to all ability checks unless they have some way to combat the air's effects. The ship's natives have adapted to their rank environs. A *crown of the void* (SJR1 *Lost Ships,* page 77), *create air* spell (*Concordance of Arcane Space,* page 21), or a *wall of fog* spell can all permanently or temporarily freshen air around the PCs. There is little to be done, however, about the constant stench of rat dung that pervades the ship.

The Wreck

The PCs run across the drifting hulk of the ancient ogre mammoth *Dark Oliphant* while traveling through a remote area of wildspace, perhaps a forgotten asteroid field, a sargasso, or a bandit-ridden sphere. Redeyes, as detailed in SJR1 *Lost Ships,* is a perfect setting.

> You have traveled for weeks without excitement when the lookout cries "Ship off the starboard lowbeam!" As you watch, an immense, motionless hulk slowly creeps into view. It is an ancient ogre mammoth with a name scrawled across its bow in Common so archaic that you can barely decipher it: *Dark Oliphant.*
>
> The wreck is scorched, scarred, and riddled with fungus and dry rot, and at first it looks too much like one more piece of space flotsam to bother with. However, your cook spots a lone gray figure on the weapons deck. As your party watches, the figure waves and makes a spacerfarer's handsign that means peace. At second glance, the figure is gone.

1. Top Deck.

> The ship's top deck consists only of weapons cockpits with ladderwells leading down from them into the lower decks of the *Dark Oliphant.* The weapons topside include six

large ballistas, two large catapults, and a rusted out bombard. Most are obviously ruined, with mosses and ferns tenaciously rooted in the bare deck. The mysterious figure was first sighted on this deck, but as you arrive it is nowhere to be seen.

Each weapons cockpit contains an entrance hatch to the lower decks. Deck weapons that aren't obviously broken break on the first use; they are all corroded with dry rot. When the ogres manning this deck realized that the *Oliphant* was dead in the void, and that scores of angry elves would be storming down on them momentarily, they retreated to covered positions below decks, so this area is relatively unscarred by battle. The figure the PCs saw was the spiritjam Metsalix, who is waiting for them in the walls of the deck below.

2. Observation Deck.

The sooty, dusty chamber at the top of the ladderwell is bare except for the skeletons of three ogres and their rusted weapons. Two eyelike windows gaze out onto the void. Curiously, the soot that covers nearly every other surface has been wiped away from the windows.

Metsalix uses this room as his lair so that he can watch the void even when he isn't pacing the top deck. The *glassteel* windows are almost impossible to break. The only other entrance is the ladder from area 9. The ogres in here choked to death when smoke boiled up the hatch and filled the room.

3. Upper Deck.

The cavernous upper deck is as large as a warehouse. Its open space is unbroken except for a few enclosed alcoves that store stone shot and bolts. Ladders descend to the decks below and rise into the weapons cockpits above. As you look about this deck, a figure appears before you, wavery and wispy as an unfocused mirage.

Although this deck was once littered with ogres who died fighting elven boarding parties, their bones have long since been collected by Mucklgun. The PCs' wavery visitor is Gamminole's psychic image. He has taken the form of a helpless and attractive person, perhaps a stunningly beautiful woman or a cute little halfling. Describe whatever form you have chosen for him to dupe the PCs with, then go on to give the PCs his plea.

"I'm Gamminole, once a priest among the elves. I have been on this ship for 300 years, ever since we defeated the ogres who manned it. During our battle, when it looked as if I was about die, I used magic to hide my soul. I was left behind after the elves sacked the ship—I can hardly blame them for leaving, since none of them knew where to look for me. Ever since then, I have waited for wandering spacefarers to come and save me.

"However, the undead spirits of the ogre magi who piloted this ship are also still aboard, and they have been searching for me for 300 years. I'm vulnerable, and if they found my hiding place, I would surely be slain. I need you to destroy them before I can be free.

"I have hidden scrolls of *raise dead* spells in quarters on the main deck. You can destroy the undead by casting these spells on their corpses. The vessels of the spiritjams' power rest on the bridge, on the main deck behind a magical blue door. Only a special key can open the door, but the key was given to one of the ogre mages' servants for safekeeping. If you slay my persecutors and release me, I can reward you richly. During my centuries here I have found all the treasures hidden on the *Dark Oliphant*."

Gamminole will not give the PCs any other information. He tries to distract them from tough questions by begging the PCs to hurry. If the PCs use magic to determine if Gamminole is lying or to discern his alignment, remember that they are not talking to Gamminole himself but to an immaterial duplicate. Only a faint aura of magic can be detected. If questioned, Gamminole claims that this curious situation is due to his "spiritual" form. He intends to *dominate* a PC as soon as he is free of harassment by the spiritjams.

The adventurers encounter another ogre mage here, one they don't notice. Metsalix follows the PCs unseen from here on, hoping to be present when they find Gamminole's hiding place.

4. Ammunition Alcove.

These dusty cubicles are as lifeless as the rest of the upper deck. Several barrels are filled with ballista bolts, tips pitted by rust and shafts corroded by slime and lichen. The catapult shot heaped in crumbling wooden bins is still in fine condition, though blanketed with thick dust.

5. Crew Quarters.

This large room is filled with rot and dust. It looks like it hasn't been disturbed since the *Dark Oliphant*'s final battle. Bunk beds line the curve of the rear wall, most of them broken and buckled. The footlockers contain only some rusty weapons. Under the drifts of dust, the floor is mottled with stains of blood and putrefaction.

Mucklgun has long since collected all the bony remains of ogre-elf skirmishes in this room and spirited them away to the cargo hold, but the ominous stains should make the PCs think. If the room is very carefully searched, 5 sp can be found at the bottom of a footlocker.

6. Crew Quarters. This room resembles area 5, except that it was more thoroughly looted.

7. Crew Commons. As the PCs approach this area, they can see that one of the doors has been broken off its hinges. The room inside is pitch black. An elaborate network of webs, some dusty and others brand new, shrouds everything beneath it.

A colony of 18 giant spiders lives here; 3-18 are present at any time. They rush to attack any light or fire source near their lair, fearing for the safety of their webs. Otherwise, they attack only creatures foolish enough to step inside.

Giant spiders (18): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison bite; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC1.

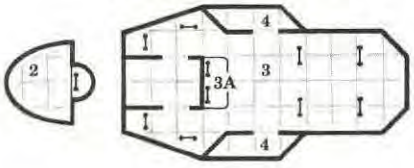
The spiders have no treasure other than some fresh rats wrapped up in their webs and still twitching. Dried husks of rat skin and bones lie against the walls.

8. Dakanan's Trap. Anyone passing through this seemingly deserted hallway trips a wire that drops a packet of *dust of sneezing and choking* on their

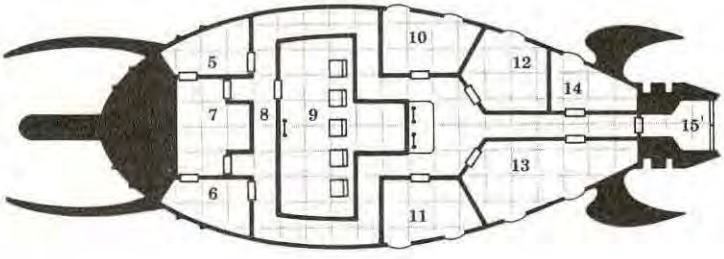
The *Dark Oliphant*

1 square = 5'

Upper Decks

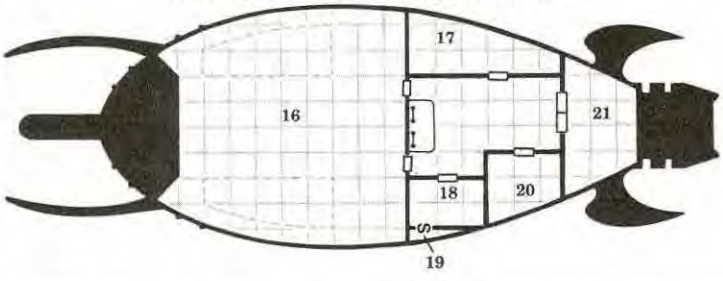


Main Deck



Cargo Deck

Gravity is reverse of upper decks.



heads. The noise of sneezing and choking PCs attracts Dakanan to see what food his trap has brought him, but if he is outnumbered he will attack only once or twice and then retreat. A thief can detect the wire with the usual chances. The trap has operated well for 300 years, but Dakanan has set it with his last packet of magical dust.

9. Bridge. The ogre command center has only one door, painted blue with silver runes. The ogre magi stole a *portal of impregnability* from the ship of a human mage and installed it on their bridge to prevent unauthorized entry during battle. The door bestows the following powers on any room it opens into:

- When shut (as it is now), it is locked as if by an 18th-level *wizard lock* spell.
- It is enspelled to protect the room from scrying or divination spells.
- It prevents entry from another plane by *blink* or *dimension door* spells, or Ethereal foes.
- The walls of the chamber it protects prevent passage by *passwall, gaseous form,* or similar means of entry.

The blue door is a unique magical item created by the mage it was stolen from. Its magical wards are not proof against *teleportation* or *plant door* spells. However, as a mage generally needs to be familiar with his destination (and the adventurers can't see the interior of the chamber because of its wards against divination), *teleporting* is hazardous at best. To open the door, the PCs must either cast a *wish* or *limited wish* spell or use the key in the dead ogre's pouch in the mess hall (area 21).

The ogre magic spiritjams know where the key is, but they have no reason to use it to enter area 9. They are uneasy about being around the remains of their corporeal bodies. The blackened corpses represent too many bad memories of death, and of fleshly pleasure they can no longer enjoy. They will, however, rush to protect their bodies from harm if they sense danger to their remains. However, they can enter area 9 only if the door is open, as even spiritjams cannot enter an area guarded by a *portal of impregnability.*

The PCs could remove the *portal of impregnability* and transfer it to a room on their own spelljamming vessel. However, the hinges are on the inside, and the door must be opened before it can be removed.

> Behind the blue door, everything is soot black. Five thrones are lined up facing the door, and a rather large skeleton sits on each, bones blackened and warped as if from great heat. Splinters and chunks of charred wood lie scattered all over the floor. Two piles of similar bones are heaped on either side of the thrones. A warped blade rests on each pile of bones.

The elven mage who destroyed the helms disintegrated in the smoke-powder explosion, and the helms are as dead as their helmsmen. The bastard swords of the two ogre bodyguards are rusted, bent, and useless.

The dead helmsmen do still have some treasure. Corvaad's corpse has a *bastard sword +2, +4 vs. rodents* sheathed at its side. It is named Ratslayer, and though caked with grimy soot, the sword was unharmed by the blast. It glows a faint sparkly blue if unsheathed.

Mucklgun's and Gamminole's corpses wear amulets around their throats. Mucklgun's amulet is an adamantine skull, the *amulet of undead animation*

that lends his spiritjam the power to animate zombies and skeletons. At the beginning of the adventure, this amulet has only three charges left. Mucklgun may use the remaining charges in battle with the PCs. The amulet cannot be recharged, but it has two large rubies set into its eye sockets, and as jewelry it has a value of 7,000 gp.

Gamminole's heart-shaped pendant looks black until the soot is wiped away to reveal crystal. This is his *amulet of life protection,* extended far beyond its normal capacities. In life, none of the ogre magi (including Gaminole) were aware that the amulet was magical, and none has the wizardly savvy to recognize the amulet for what it is.

None of the ogres or ogre magi can be successfully raised; they have been dead far longer than that spell's limits allow. However, because of their psychic link, the spiritjams can sense when their bodies are tampered with. If the PCs disturb their remains, the spiritjams frantically attack whoever is threatening them. This is the only time they fight to the death. Gamminole, on the other hand, just waits until the dust settles, then uses his *projected image* to thank the PCs while he quietly *dominates* a servant to carry the amulet.

10. Captain's Quarters.

This room is lavishly decorated with rotting ogre banners. Two badly rusted two-handed swords are crossed above the bed. The room resembles an odd shrine, with the skeleton of a large animal spread out on the bed among many newer weapons.

Dakanan's lair is a memorial to the creature on the bed, his deceased pet polar bear. Brutus the bear was a brave and loyal fighting beast that Dakanan has mourned for 300 years. The weapons belonged to the adventurers Dakanan has killed on the *Dark Oliphant.* None are magical, but one special long sword is worth up to 200 gp to a collector. Its blade is silvered, and its pommel is encrusted with jewels. If Dakanan has not already been encountered near one of his traps, he waits here and will fight fiercely to protect Brutus (+2 to THAC0), though never to the death.

11. Spelljammer's Quarters.

This room was once lavishly furnished, but now the red carpeting is rotted, the once-rich tapestries are mildewed, and a shelf of odd spell components has spoiled. Six sallow-skinned ogres stand unmoving at the back of the room.

Mucklgun long ago animated these monster zombies to keep Gamminole's three *raise dead* scrolls out of the hands of wandering adventurers. The zombies do not attack unless a PC crosses the threshold of the room.

Ogre zombies (6): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 36 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* death magic, poison, and cold; MR special; SZ L; XP 650; MC1.

The scrolls are secured in a secret compartment at the head of the bed, along with Gamminole's well-preserved spell book. The spell book contains *burning hands, enlarge, hold portal, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, unseen servant; ESP, fog cloud, knock, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement,* and *wizard lock.*

12. Holding Pen. This locked room holds a gorgon in *temporal stasis.* At the time of its destruction, the *Dark Oliphant* was taking this monster to the ogrish emperor for his bestiary. The door is both locked and *wizard locked* (3rd level). If the door is opened, the *temporal stasis* is broken and the beast attacks. It is hungry enough to break down doors and walls to get at prey.

Gorgon: INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 52; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA petrification; SZ L; ML 9; XP 1,400; MC2.

13. Crew Quarters. Once this area was two separate rooms, but generations of rats have chewed away the dividing wall to form one large and comfortable cavern. The floor is obscured by layers of debris that the rats have collected for their nests.

There are 50 + 1d100 vicious giant rats here, plus hundreds of rats too young to defend themselves. These rats are much fiercer than most giant rats because of the dangerous environment. They bite at any fresh meat they see, moving or not.

Giant rats: INT semi; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SZ T; ML 15; XP 35; MC1 (modified).

14. Guest Quarters.

This is a very neat ogre room, with one large bed and neatly turned down sheets. A picture of a bloody ogre battle hangs over the bed and an odd blackish-gray flower blooms in a pot on a bedside table.

No one was staying here at the time of the battle, and there are no traces of combat or destruction. The skull orchid is covered in a thick layer of dust. This odd flower has long been extinct in its natural habitat, a tiny world the ogres decimated for food and slaves. This specimen was taken from a school of alchemy several hundred years ago, where it had been treated with a modified potion of *plant growth* that made it effectively immortal. The orchid's coloration and shape resemble a skull, but the flower is valuable only as a curiosity. It does not create enough air to affect the air envelope on a spelljamming ship. An alchemist might pay 1,000-2,000 gp for the flower.

15. Jettison Alcove. Dakanan has trapped the door to this alcove. When the door is opened, it triggers a heavy jettison that has been turned to face the interior of the ship, sending shrapnel flying at the door. Dakanan has packed the jettison with unpleasant debris, including broken glass and twisted, rusted weapons. The miniature catapult is in perfect working condition, lovingly oiled and cared for over the centuries by Dakanan. It has a THAC0 of 14 and affects all creatures within a 15′ radius, doing 3-18 hp damage.

16. Cargo Deck.

This gigantic chamber is a wasteland of bones and broken wood. Dozens of barrels and crates are stacked at the far end of the chamber. Wrecked barrels, broken crates, thousands of bones, rusted weapons, and other large pieces of trash are heaped in stark drifts.

This chamber was the site of the last battle between the elves and ogres, and many of their corpses were simply aban-

doned. Here Mucklgun reigns supreme. To add to the destruction of the battle, he scours the *Dark Oliphant* for every bone he can find and brings them all to this room. He loves his privacy and has bolted the cargo bay shut from the inside.

Mucklgun always comes out of concealment here to defend his lair. He has animated 15 normal skeletons and 15 monster skeletons. He directs his minions to attack any intruders while he stays behind to cast *darkness* over the battle (with no effect on the skeletons) and shout taunts.

Mucklgun is a coward; if he is wounded, he withdraws to watch the fight from within the walls. If his forces are losing, he uses his amulet (see "The Ogre Magi") to animate 18 more hit dice of bones into skeletons (raising two monster skeletons and six normal ones, and draining his amulet). Then he flees. The noise of a large battle in this chamber draws the attention of the other spiritjams, and if Corvaad has not yet been encountered, he joins the action eagerly.

If the PCs search this room after the battle, they find 1-6 tarnished silver coins each turn, to a total of 300 sp. The intact casks and crates contain only fouled water and other rancid supplies.

Skeletons (15+): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from edged weapons; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* fear, and cold; MR special; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; MC1.

Monster skeletons (15+): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 40 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SD as skeletons; MR special; SZ L; ML special; XP 650; MC1.

17. Sick Bay.

> This room is sparsely furnished with several dusty pallets, a wooden cupboard, a small cask, and a stone fire pit with several iron pokers.

An ogre sick bay is an exercise in macabre humor, as it also doubles as a torture chamber. The cupboard holds two potions of *extra healing,* several rusty thumbscrews, half a dozen rusty scalpels, several jars of useless herbs, and a jar of acid. The cask contains very fine elvish brandy worth about 1,000 gp to a connoisseur or an innkeeper who can afford it. It is labeled "Medicine" in Old Ogrish.

18. Armory.

> A dozen cobwebbed barrels contain ruined weapons: spears, ballista bolts, pole arms, and rusty bastard swords. The chests stacked behind the barrels are closed.

For the most part, the chests are unlocked and contain more ruined weapons: daggers, heavy crossbows, and quarrels. The one locked chest holds a shiny, pitch-black, 1'-diameter glass globe that looks rather like a cannonball. It is actually a special catapult load, a thick glass sphere with a black pudding magically compressed into it. If handled roughly, there is a 50% chance that the globe will break open and spill its terrible contents all over the handler.

If the PCs don't disturb the globe, Metsalix will. If he has followed the PCs successfully, he drops the globe while their backs are turned or after they leave the room. Once freed, the black

pudding investigates the interesting vibrations the PCs make by walking, running, and fighting.

Black pudding: INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 10; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA dissolve metal and wood; SD immune to acid, cold, and poison; lightning splits it in two; SZ M; ML special; XP 5,000; MC1.

The back wall of this room is the door to a secret compartment (area 19). The dust and grime of centuries make the door hard to detect (half chance to detect a secret door, even for an elf).

19. Treasure Chamber. Three chests are stacked in this 5'-wide by 2½'-deep compartment.

The ogre magi kept their treasures in these magically trapped chests. Only Gamminole and Dakanan know the command word ("Wyrmwood") needed to bypass the trap. If any of the chests are opened without the command word, the magical ward summons a plasman, which attacks mindlessly. There is a good chance that any battle with the plasman will accidentally start a fire. The dry rotted wood of the ship suffers −3 to save vs. fire attacks and must save each round of combat (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 39).

In addition to the plasman trap, each chest is locked. The first chest contains 1,291 sp, 2,005 gp, and 852 pp. The second contains 5,036 gp. The third chest contains a silver and amethyst goblet (3,000 gp); an elaborate, ornamental golden helm for a child prince (5,000 gp); and a tablet of carved gold inlaid with lapis and sapphires (7,000 gp). It also contains six blue gems (three 500-gp aquamarines and three 1,000-gp sapphires); potions of *longevity, invulnerability, white dragon control,* and *ESP*; and a *robe of blending.*

Plasman: INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 9, fly 12 (C); HD 12; hp 78; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16 and 2-12; SA heat blast once per turn does 3-18 hp damage within 5', 2-12 hp at 10', and 1-6 hp at 20'; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, half damage from edged weapons; SZ H (12' tall); ML 16; XP 8,000; MC7.

20. Galley.

The door into this chamber is divided into independent upper and lower sections. Both are ajar. Your light reveals a large brick oven and a stout wood table. Farther back are several barrels, two rotted sacks of flour, and cupboards of pots and pans against the walls. Several ogre-sized pots, big enough to cook a small humanoid, sit on the cold hearth, and two more sit on the table. These pots are filled with stagnant water and thick layers of algae.

During the elvish mop-up of the *Dark Oliphant,* the ogres slew two elves in this room and stuffed their remains into pots. Mucklgun discovered the remains later and thought the odd disposal of the bodies was a great joke. He keeps the pots filled with water to cultivate algae, because he has animated 12 giant rat skeletons in the bottoms of the pots. When the PCs enter the galley, the rat and elf skeletons leap to the attack. Their thick layers of slime protect them so that fire, acid, and holy-water attacks do only half damage.

Elf skeletons (2): hp 6 each; see area 16 for complete statistics.

Animal skeletons (12): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 1−1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD as normal skeleton; MR special; SZ T; ML special; XP 65; MC1.

A packet of five 50-gp bloodstones that belonged to one of the elven boarders still rests in one of the pots.

21. Mess Hall.

The long rows of dusty tables seem to have been undisturbed for centuries. Thick dust covers everything. Slumped at the head of one table are three large ogre skeletons with tiny, ivory-colored mushrooms growing in their eye sockets.

Nothing in this mess hall is dangerous. The ogres suffocated when the ship caught fire. The key to area 9, a delicate wrought-iron skeleton key that radiates magic—rests in the pocket of one of the ogre skeletons, along with three 10-gp gems and 5 pp.

This ogre footman was entrusted with the key to the *portal of impregnability,* and therefore the bridge, before the *Dark Oliphant*'s final battle with the elves. When the *Oliphant*'s helms failed,

the footman bolted to the bridge to see what was the matter. Upon finding his captains dead, the footman hid from raiding elves by locking himself into the bridge. When the spiritjams first awakened into their undead existence, they slew the cowardly footman and used the key to free themselves, locking the door behind them. The footman's body and the key were deposited in this room to make looters run the entire length of the ship to get the key.

Concluding the Adventure

The mammoth makes good salvage if the PCs can tow it. Due to war, age, and rot, the hulk has only 32 hull points left. Statistics for the mammoth are given in *SJR1 Lost Ships.*

If the PCs fail to defeat the spiritjams and retreat to their ship, they may find that the spiritjams have followed them, or that one or more of the ogre magi reached the ship before the PCs. The spiritjams follow and fight until they either kill everything on board, the PCs' ship moves out of range, or their lives are in danger. The PCs' retreat is harrowing at best.

Gamminole appears to the PCs after they destroy the spiritjams. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> In the exhaustion of battle's aftermath, a wispy form of pastel lights coalesces in the air before you. It is Gamminole. "Thank you," he (or she) says earnestly. "Long have I been trapped here by those monsters. You have freed me to go beyond the veil of this sphere."

If the PCs have not found the treasures in area 19 or Gamminole's spell book in area 11, the ogre mage will prod the adventurers in those directions. He does not tell them the command word to disarm the trapped chests in area 19 because his rescuers might realize his real identity. If the PCs have already found those treasures, he informs them that they have found everything of value on the ship. He then fades out, saying "Good-bye, my friends!"

Gamminole is a good liar. During the encounter he tries to *dominate* one of the PCs to be his servant. If he successfully *dominates* a PC or NPC, the ogre mage's first priority is to make sure that his new servant does not give his position away. If he fails to *dominate* a servant, he waits passively until he finds a weaker individual. Gamminole always appears in a likable or trustworthy form, using the knowledge he has gleaned from his meetings with the PCs. Remember, Gamminole's *projected image* is his only means of contact with the outside world.

Gamminole is not foolish enough to pursue an active agenda at cross purposes with the PCs. His main desire is to remain hidden. *Dominated* PCs develop an obsession with the *amulet of life protection,* wishing to own and protect it. They also develop an unreasonable fascination with finding more ogre magi, a desire they are unable to explain if pressed. Gamminole influences his servant to kill people who suspect the truth, though he wants them done away with as discretely as possible. Only as a last-ditch effort to defend the amulet will he try to make a servant do something against his nature. If a host breaks Gamminole's *domination,* he attempts to enslave someone else.

The party is Gamminole's mode of transportation until he finds an ogre mage host, so he might be with the PCs for a very long time. Because Gamminole is so good at hiding his control over his servants, PCs make Intelligence checks only once a week to notice the odd behavior of *dominated* crew or party members.

Gamminole is wily genius of exceptional will, with an Intelligence of 19. While he can easily be destroyed by crushing the amulet and setting his soul loose, the point is that he probably won't be discovered. If he is discovered, all *dominated* servants will fight in his defense.

When he finds an suitable ogre mage host, Gamminole makes a psychic attack much like a *magic jar* spell. If the target ogre mage fails his saving throw, his personality is permanently cast out of his body and Gamminole's takes its place. Gamminole can attack only ogre magi this way, and only until the attack succeeds. When Gamminole's spirit has found a new home, the amulet crumbles to dust.

Once he has an ogre mage body again, Gamminole regains his normal spell-like powers. He also retains the *project image* and *domination* abilities that he gained while trapped in the *amulet of life protection,* making him even more formidable. Both powers operate at 9th level. He can also cast spells as a multi-classed wizard/cleric (3rd level in each class), given time to pray and a spell book to study.

How Gamminole leaves the party is up to circumstance and the DM. Remember his intelligence and his fierce will to live, but also his greed for treasure and his lust to possess his spell book again. He might subvert an ogre mage host quietly, then sneak off *invisibly* with hoards of jewels and spell books. Or he may subvert an ogre magi clan leader and use his new rank to try to take everything the PCs own! Ω

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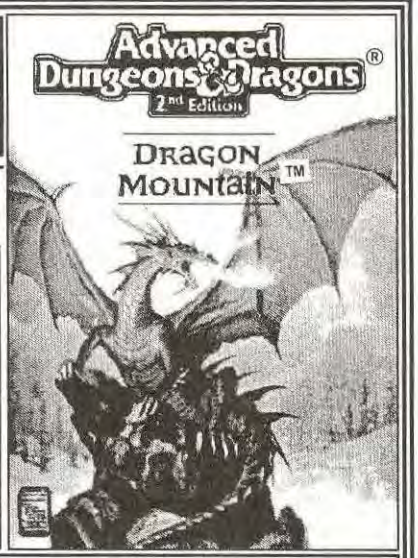

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HOPEFUL DAWN

BY GARY LAI

It's trick-or-treat—with bad tricks and no treats.

Artwork by David O. Miller

Gary is a sophomore at Cornell University, majoring in economics while dabbling in freelance writing, piano, basketball, and RPGs (playing for 11 years so far). He would like to thank his girlfriend, Maja Arcyz, for her support, and also Michael Coan, Corey Holzer, and Roland Lai for playtesting.

"Hopeful Dawn" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 3-6 (about 24 total levels). This scenario is suited for a party of rogues and warriors, although priests and wizards could also run through the module without too much difficulty. The adventure takes place in Veluna City (hex Y4-96 on the *From the Ashes* or WORLD OF GREYHAWK® boxed set maps), a large metropolis in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK fantasy setting, and the adventure's lore and locales originate from Oerth. It takes place during a specific time of the Greyhawk calendar, when both moons are in their new phase (see below). The Greyhawk wars are over; the year is 584 CY. With a few changes, "Hopeful Dawn" can be run in any gaming world or time.

Good-aligned PCs are recommended for play. In the GREYHAWK® fantasy setting, none of the PCs should be worshipers of the god Rao.

Optional rules from PHBR2 *Complete Thief's Handbook* (*CTH*) and PHBR1 *Complete Fighter's Handbook* (*CFH*) are set off in gray boxes like this one. If you do not wish to use these supplements, simply ignore any references made to them.

Although this scenario will confront PCs with a constant aura of the supernatural, there is almost no magic to be found anywhere in this module. Most of the NPCs have a superstitious aversion toward magic.

For the Player Characters

The party is traveling through the Archclericy of Veluna, about to pass through Veluna City. The ideal time to run this adventure is Goodmonth 11 on the Oerth calendar. As the PCs approach Veluna City from the south, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The twilight sun casts long shadows over the stone walls and spires of Veluna City as it rises into view from

the dry, dusty plain before you. You've grown weary of the cracked roadway you travel on, so you feel relief as it slowly meanders to the gates of the metropolis. As clouds begin to gather overhead and the winds kicks dust into the air, you approach the city.

From the first moment you entered the Archclericy of Veluna, you saw temples at every turn of the road. The Archcleric who rules the state is a strict worshipper of Rao, and his influential position and his evangelical zeal have combined to bring the citizens of Veluna into his church. It's unusual, but everyone seems to worship Rao.

Even as you approach the city, you see that the towers of a very large temple of Rao dominate the scene. Yet the closer you get, the more you feel as though there were something immensely foreboding and unwelcoming about the metropolis. As you walk through the city gates, past nervous and taciturn guards, your suspicions are doubled, for every store and side street you pass appears to be deserted. Occasionally, out of the corner of your eye, you see people rushing to and fro huddled in their cloaks, but no one speaks. The only large crowd seems to be gathered around the temple you can see through the buildings at the end of the main road.

At present, the PCs are just inside the city's south gate. If they wish to go immediately to the temple (area A on the city map), continue with this introduction. Otherwise, refer to the section describing "Veluna City" below.

As the party arrives at the temple, they find that the large crowd is immersed in quiet prayer. Eventually, the PCs are approached by Joshua, a priest of Rao. Although he attempts to be polite, he regards the adventurers as possibly heretical because they are not members of his order. Nevertheless, he is happy to explain the state of Veluna City to them—in his roundabout way. Almost any city resident can also relate the following information, including the present worshipers. When the PCs catch Joshua's attention, read or paraphrase the following. Do not give all this information as one long speech, but allow the PCs to interrupt and ask questions.

"Why has the gossip of the serfs, the haggling of the merchants given way to humble prayer, you ask? The answer to this question is tied to the fate of man and the divine guidance of Rao. Oh, that the pagans would simply pay heed to the words of our lord, to be lifted from the depths of their ignorance and false worship! You will find enlightenment on page 263 of the *Word of Incarum*. Incarum! The greatest of devas who set to ink Rao's word millennia past to chart man's course for eons to come!"

Joshua produces a leather-bound copy of the *Word of Incarum*, the most holy of the order's texts. He then begins a long and detailed sermon. If interrupted during the following oration, Joshua can be persuaded to sum up his point succinctly (refer to the last two paragraphs). Otherwise, he continues:

"Incarum writes:

'At time's beginning, ere the light of dawn,
Lord Rao, sovereign supreme did spawn
A joined heaven and earth to engender
A race of men under the blessed splendor
Of His Soul—'

"Rao is the father of all men, and in the first hours man was content with his guidance. But then came Tharizdun, evil incarnate, who tempted mankind with evil power. Mankind heard, and in its ambition as well as its infantile foolishness, renounced Rao. Thus, humans brought upon themselves an era of despair and suffering under Tharizdun. Their renunciation drove the light of Rao from the heavens, plunging them into an oppressive night.

"But a few repented and returned to Rao's embrace. For them, Rao sent the moons Celene and Luna to shine on two valleys, to serve as shelters for the faithful. Then, Rao ordered Incarum to drive out Tharizdun's hordes, providing him with a crook enchanted against evil. Incarum fulfilled his charge, but many evil men remained to preserve Tharizdun's influence, though Tharizdun himself was banished. So now, Rao's soul shines during the day, and Celene and Luna watch over the evil of the evening. Will evil always remain with us? Incarum tells us:

'So weal and woe shall make war till the night
Tharizdun returns, sealing evil's plight,
For against the dark hordes shall Rao send
The Crook, east from Valley Luna to rend
His Fury on the minions of darkness,
When twin moons won't shine for all the faithless.
For eternity will Rao have won,
Sending sinners to wastes shorn of the sun.'

"Incarum tells us that Rao shall cleanse the world on a night when Luna and her handmaiden, Celene, will not light the heavens. Because tonight is the only night of the year when both moons are dark, this day holds great holy significance. Tonight Rao may visit the devout to lead them to paradise or he may consign the unholy to an eternity of suffering. We the devout know this evening as the Night of Hopeful Judgment, when we pray in reverence to our god, hoping that evil will be shouldered aside for a hundred years of peace and plenty.

"Dark and sinful souls, however, are unsure of what fate will befall them. Foolishly they lock themselves in their homes, trembling in fright and perhaps believing that their locks will hide them from the All-Father's sight. For them, it is a night of Hopeful Dawn.

"The townsfolk, for the most part faithful followers of Rao, are all either in pious prayer or in sheer terror. My friends, it is not too late! Renounce your false gods! There is room in Rao's embrace for all! If tonight is the glorious time, then we may walk arm in arm to the new age that will follow!"

If the PCs continue to talk to Joshua, they will find him so adamant about converting them that he will talk of little else. Deeply religious, Joshua is basically a good man who honestly feels that the PCs will be saved from damnation if they convert. In his late 40s, with a balding head of medium brown hair, Joshua is garbed in the white robes of

the order. He carries only his holy symbol and the *Word of Incarum*.

Joshua: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; C5; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); S 8, D 10, C 11, I 13, W 15, Ch 10; ML 14. Spells: *bless, cure light wounds, detect evil, protection from evil, remove fear; chant* (×2), *enthrall, know alignment; prayer* (see sidebar for more information on the clerics of Rao).

By the time the party finishes its discussion with Joshua, the sun has set. The townspeople slowly begin to walk back to their homes as Joshua himself bids the party good night. He recommends that they stay at Tannenbaum's Chalice (area B on the city map). Incidentally, this is the only inn in the city that has vacancies tonight. The city is almost totally dark as the PCs make their way through the streets under a moonless sky.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

More than just old prophecies and frightened townsfolk confront the PCs in the dark streets of Veluna City. While the majority of the populace spends the night terror-ridden behind locked doors, a small minority wanders the city undaunted by fear. This includes not only the adventurers but also the members of the local thieves' guild.

Made up exclusively of thieves who hate the worship of Rao, the guild has hatched an elaborate scheme to reap profit by taking advantage of the religious furor. Masquerading as tanar'ri, the thieves plan to raid the homes and shops of devout citizens, playing on fears of the coming of Tharizdun and the citizens' misgivings about their own sins. The guild hopes that, if the thieves appear convincing enough, few citizens will fight back as they loot and pillage. For insurance, they have hired a group of mercenaries to back them up. Unfortunately for the thieves, the intervention of an adventuring party was not part of their plan.

Hazenbane

The only thieves' guild in Veluna City calls itself Hazenbane to express its hatred for Hazen, the Archcleric of Veluna. These fugitives from Velunan law all have a score to settle with the Archcleric. They steal not only for the promise of riches but also to revenge themselves against a nation they feel has wronged them. One consequence of this mission is their refusal to pay any heed to the doctrine of Rao. They will also have nothing to do with magic (see the description of Vaughan below).

Because of the effectiveness of law enforcement in Veluna, Hazenbane has had to operate very secretively. The guild meets and performs major heists only a few times a year. Membership is kept low, and many members have false identities within the city that they use to garner information and avoid detection. Their base of operations is an old abandoned armory (area F on the city map) that they have trapped extensively. Through this secretiveness, they have been quite successful in the past several years, and the majority of the populace is unaware that the guild exists.

Four of the guild's 17 members are detailed below. Generic statistics are provided for encounters with any of the other thieves.

Typical Hazenbane thief (13 total): AL any evil; AC 8; MV 12; T1-4; hp 4/level; THAC0 20-19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP varies; leather armor, short sword. Each thief encountered during tonight's heist will have treasure type P, with no single item worth more than 50 gp.

Vaughan: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; T10; hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 2 (uses two weapons); Dmg by weapon type; SA poison; backstab ×4; SD tumbling proficiency; S 16, D 17, C 12, I 14, W 9, Ch 13; PP 50%, OL 60%, FT 45%, MS 80%, HS 90%, DN 45%, CW 95%, RL 10%; ML 14; XP 5,000; leather armor, long sword, dagger of quality.

Vaughan wields his sword and dagger at the same time and with the normal penalties. He carries a long sword in his

The Order of Rao

When the Oeridian tribes first began their migrations from Western Oerik, a land torn apart by wars between the Baklunish and Suloise empires, much of their success in Eastern Oerik stemmed from their swift conquest and assimilation of the Flan natives. By trading culture with their Flan subjects, the Oeridians forged a powerful hybrid nation with the Flan that culminated in the establishment of the Great Kingdom. One of the elements of the Flan that the Oeridians took to was the religion of Rao. Today, the Order of Rao has the ear of many nations' rulers in the Western Flanaess.

Rao's priests have all the abilities and hindrances of clerics as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*. They wear white robes and have holidays at times of astronomical importance such as the Night of Hopeful Dawn; Midsummer's Night, the longest day of summer (Wealsun 14); and times of eclipse and comet sightings. Services include long sermons, quiet prayer, and lamentation over the evil in the world.

The temples of the order are magnificent structures, with four tall, thin spires at the corners and one in the center. The walls between the towers are buttressed, and on the larger temples they rise over 100′.

The order itself is divided into three parts: the masses, the priesthood, and the temple militant, better known as the Holy Knights of Rao. There are 100 paladins in the Holy Knights, ranging from 1st to 17th level. They are supported by hundreds of other fighters and retainers.

Rao's influence is widespread because most of Rao's followers are not commoners but rulers, sages, diplomats, scholars, and philosophers, and these powerful individuals apply Rao's teachings to their subjects. Veluna City is one of the few places where Rao is widely worshiped among commoners. This should be readily apparent to PCs who come from outside the city. His worship is confined to the Western Flanaess, and Rao's temples can be found in Veluna, Furyondy, Bissel, the Wild Coast, Keoland, and the Gran March. In Greyhawk City, Jerome Kazinskaia, a high priest of Rao, is a member of the Directing Oligarchy.

Statistics for Rao are not provided, as the greater god has no avatar and has never been known to appear in any form. Instead, sightings of Rao's devas have been reported. It is rumored that his clerics all draw their power from the Crook of Rao.

primary hand and Shrike, a nonmagical dagger balanced for throwing, in his secondary hand. Shrike is coated with contact poison type L (see page 73 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide)* that wears off after the first hit. In addition, Vaughan carries three acid vials in a pouch; in an emergency, he will hurls these vials at opponents.

If you are using the *Complete Thief's Handbook,* Vaughan is a member of the Swashbuckler kit. Instead of a long sword he wields a rapier, which is his weapon of choice, giving him a THAC0 of 11. Shrike becomes a stiletto of exceptional quality (+1 to attack and damage rolls) He may disarm opponents as per the kit description.

Born a nobleman of the House of Plar in Veluna, the mischievous boy Vaughan indulged himself in the luxuries that his station afforded. For excitement he took up the thieving trade and robbed his trusting fellow noblemen blind. However, he was eventually caught in the act, and a saddened Archcleric Hazen excommunicated him from the Order of Rao, exiled him from the nation, and branded the following symbol on his left cheek to indicate that he was a servant of evil:

Afterward, Vaughan fled to Greyhawk City in an attempt to start his life anew. But the memory of how he had been treated burned in his soul, and he vowed vengeance. After receiving formal training in thievery in Greyhawk, Vaughan returned in disguise to Veluna City five years later in order to establish a guild that burned with hatred for the archcleric. Still bearing the scar of the brand, today Vaughan is the guildmaster of Hazenbane. He utterly detests the Order of Rao and renounces its doctrine. Vaughan also detests magic in general. He regards it as a weapon of those too weak to rely on their personal skills. As a result, no one in Hazenbane possesses magical items or has any dealings with wizards or priests.

Now in his late 30s, with black hair, blue eyes, and tanned skin, Vaughan was an amiable and handsome man until the excommunication not only marred his appearance but perverted his character. Now, Vaughan is a bitter, cynical, and brooding man filled with resentment and hatred. The scheme to mimic tanar'ri was his brainchild. If the PCs make enemies of him and he escapes, he will not be a man who forgives and forgets.

Vaughan is the only Hazenbane member without a cover identity. He is almost never seen in public, preferring to stay in the guild headquarters, plotting and directing.

Anastasia: AL CN; AC 5; MV 12; T7; hp 37; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 16; PP 20%, OL 75%, FT 50%, MS 65%, HS 40%, DN 25%, CW 90%, RL 20%; backstab ×3; ML 7; XP 1,400; leather armor, long sword.

When using the *CTH,* Anastasia is a member of the Burglar kit. Her pick-pockets skill is lowered to 15%, her read-language skill to 15%, and her open-locks and climb-walls skills are raised to 80% and 95% respectively. The alertness proficiency allows her to be surprised only on a 1 in 6.

Anastasia was born to an impoverished serf family on a manor near Mitrik. After several bad harvests, her father was imprisoned because of his inability to pay church taxes. He died in prison, and shortly afterward Anastasia fled to Veluna City to find a new life. An iron will and her endless determination have allowed her to survive.

At the age of 24, with red hair, green eyes, and attractive features, Anastasia is a very accomplished burglar. She joined Hazenbane one year ago to aid her career and exact revenge against the state she believes killed her father. However, she has begun to regret this decision, because many of Vaughan's schemes, like tonight's, are not the clean burglary operations she prefers. Vaughan has also been making advances toward her, even though she finds him repulsive. Her morale is very poor.

By day, Anastasia works as a servant for a noble family. She uses the false name of Marianna.

Navier: AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; T4; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 9, I 13, W 10, Ch 16; PP 35%, OL 20%, FT 25%, MS 30%, HS 25%, DN 35%, CW 80%, RL 20%, backstab ×2; ML 15; XP 270; leather armor, short sword, six throwing daggers on belt.

As a member of the Swindler kit (*CTH*), Navier's open-locks skill drops to 15% and his read-languages skill rises to 25%.

Navier's true ambition in life was to be an actor, but circumstances have led him to pursue the swindling profession instead. Navier was a member of a traveling acting company when his group was imprisoned after insulting the Archcleric by performing a play about knights of an evil god. Escaping from the dungeons of Mitrik, Navier has used his acting skills to become an accomplished con artist. He joined Hazenbane after Vaughan offered him protection, and is fiercely loyal to the organization.

In his early 30s, Navier is of Suloise descent, blond haired and blue-eyed. The heist of the Night of Hopeful Dawn excites him because it allows him to use his theatrical skills.

Using the name Travis, Navier is employed as a bartender at Tannenbaum's Chalice (see later).

Dongul: AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; T5; hp 35; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18, D 12, C 16, I 7, W 8, Ch 10; PP 55, OL 30, FT 45, MS 30, HS 25%, DN 35%, CW 80%, RL 0%, backstab ×3; ML 13; XP 420; leather armor, long sword.

As a member of the Thug kit (*CTH*), Dongul wears chain mail (AC 5; MV 9) and carries a two-handed sword. He gains an additional +1 to attack rolls because of his kit (for a total of +2 to attack rolls and +3 to damage because of Strength), and his new thieving percentages are: PP 5%, OL 15%, FT 20%, MS 1%, HS 1%, DN 15%, CW 40%, RL 0%.

Once an urchin in Verbobonc, Dongul learned to resent the Order of Rao after they pursued him for mugging one of their members. Vaughan recruited him shortly after the encounter, offering him employment in Veluna City.

Vaughan uses Dongul as the guild enforcer. His great strength, skill in arms, and imposing frame (Dongul is 6'6" tall) make him a tough opponent. Dongul takes on his tasks with enthusiasm—he has a quick temper and low intelligence.

Dongul is an officer of the town watch, under the name of Hildeman. Hazenbane uses his position there to great advantage.

Swordstorm

To aid tonight's operations, Vaughan has hired a traveling mercenary company called Swordstorm. The warriors of Swordstorm, also posing as tanar'ri, are to accompany the thieves just in case combat breaks out. They also guard the headquarters.

Originally from the distant See of Medegia, 12 of Swordstorm's warriors were members of the army before they were sentenced to death for conspiring to overthrow Spidasa, the Holy Censor—a charge that was not unfounded. Their captain was able to engineer an escape, and since then they have acquired two members in their travels.

Like Hazenbane, the warriors of Swordstorm do not use magic, but for different reasons. Hextor is the god of the See of Medegia, and the original members of Swordstorm were all his fervent worshipers. They believed that Hextor had visited them in a vision and commanded them to overthrow the Holy Censor. Hextor actually did send these visions; as the god of discord he was annoyed by the order within the realm. Swordstorm's members remain devout worshipers of Hextor, and they reject any magic not associated with their patron.

The three members that the PCs are most likely to encounter are detailed below. Generic statistics for other Swordstorm members have also been provided.

Typical Swordstorm fighter (11 total): AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F1-3; hp 6/level; THAC0 20-18; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; XP varies; chain mail, long sword.

If using the *Complete Fighter's Handbook,* all typical Swordstorm fighters are Myrmidons. They are specialized with their long swords and the single weapon style, giving them an AC of 4.

Captain Charles III: AL LE; AC 2; MV 6; F5; hp 46; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 14, C 15, I 11, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; XP 270; plate mail, large shield, long sword (specialized), dagger.

A Myrmidon (*CFH*), Charles is specialized in the weapon and shield style. This gives him an extra attack to shield-punch or parry with.

In 580 CY, the ambitious and cunning Captain Charles III led a force of 400 men to overthrow the ruler of Rel Astra in hopes that Hextor would make him a general in the new government. He feels no remorse for the 388 men under his charge slain in the failed coup. He has kept up on events since he and his dozen men fled the country, and Charles was especially delighted to hear that Spidasa now suffers the Everlasting Death at the hands of Ivid IV's torturers.

In the years of his exile, Charles has traveled far and wide to train his men, acquire new members, and garner wealth. He does not trust Vaughan and is not too satisfied with the 25% of the heist he has been promised.

Charles is a man of crude manners, spitting and cursing incessantly. He kills anyone who gets in the way of his ultimate aims. Despite this, his men are loyal and hold him in an almost religious awe.

Tarquin: AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; F4; hp 40; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 17, I 17, W 7, Ch 7; ML 18; XP 270; banded mail, short sword (specialized), sling with 10 bullets.

Tarquin is a member of the Gladiator kit (*CFH*). Instead of a short sword he carries a drusus. Banded mail is replaced by semnite armor with a scutum. His sling becomes three bolas. He is specialized in the drusus, punching and wrestling, the sword-and-shield style, and the single-weapon style.

After Swordstorm escaped the See and survived the long and dangerous voyage to the Hold of the Sea Princes, the company took assignments as caravan guards. Captain Charles spent many hours at Port Toli's coliseum, watching gladiatorial games fought between slaves. He was very impressed with the prowess of Tarquin, a slave trained in combat from birth and a master of many styles. He purchased Tarquin for 1,000 gp and has yet to regret it.

In his early 20s, Tarquin is a Suloise who knows only combat. His loyalty to his new master is immense, and his training has made his fear of death nearly nonexistent. Charles has used Tarquin to fight and train the other mercenaries in combat. When the Scarlet Brotherhood seized control of Port Toli, the company began its march north to Veluna.

Fist: AL NE; AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 33; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/47, D 9, C 18, I 6, W 5, Ch 5; ML 17; XP 120; banded mail, brass knuckles.

When Fist is played using the *CFH,* he becomes a far greater opponent. He is a Berserker, with all the benefits and hindrances of that kit. He is specialized in the cesti and the two weapon style, and he is ambidextrous. This gives him the following combat statistics: #AT 5/2, +2 to attack rolls, +5 to damage. All cestus damage (base 1d4) is lethal, not temporary, although he can still knock out opponents using the punching rules.

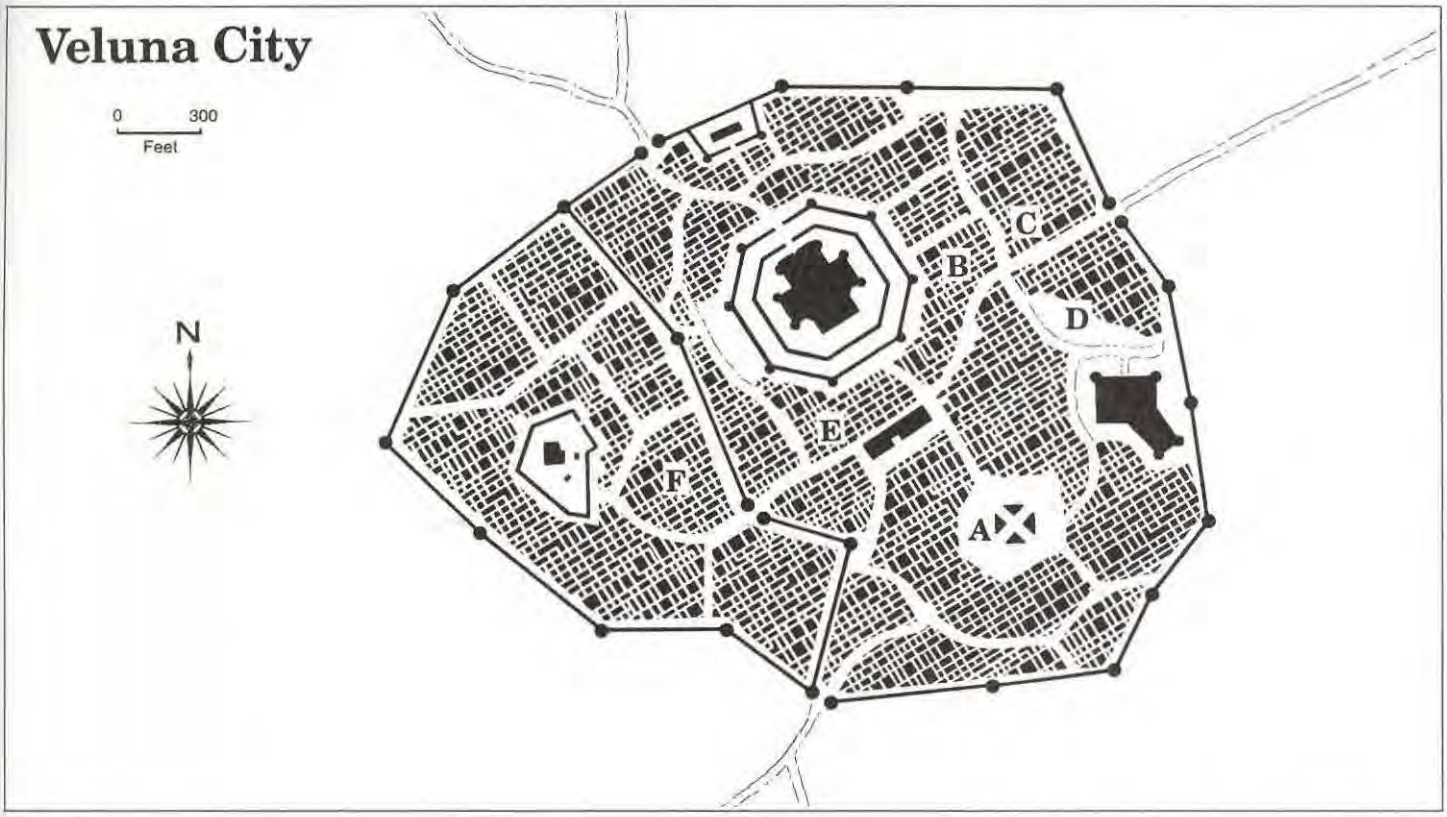
Fist was taken prisoner by the company when Swordstorm fended off an attack on a caravan it was guarding through the Amedio Jungle. Under Tarquin's training and guidance, he slowly became a loyal member of the group.

Fist is 5'9" tall and exceptionally well built, with black hair, black eyes, and bronze skin speaking of a Baklunish origin. Not an amiable fellow, he is quick tempered and knows very little Common. His nickname comes from the unarmed combat training he got from Tarquin.

Veluna City

Veluna City is a metropolis of 10,000 inhabitants. It prospers from taxes levied on the dozens of caravans that pass through the city daily. A branch of the house of Plar, the most powerful noble house in Veluna, is charged with maintaining order in the city. The nobles rule from the large castle in the city's center. Their charge is not difficult, as the very religious populace rarely rouses itself. The city has shunted most vagabonds and other undesirables into the walled southwestern ward.

While a full map of Veluna City has been provided, only six major encounter areas have been detailed for this adventure. If you wish to expand the adven-



ture or use Veluna City for future scenarios, you may want to detail the city further.

The following encounter areas are presented in the order that the PCs will explore them if they pick up on the trail of clues provided. Special sections at the end of several encounter descriptions highlight these clues. In addition, a rumor table has been provided (see below). The party may hear these rumors anywhere in the city, spoken by anyone. They may help the party locate the den of Hazenbane.

The areas detailed under "City Sites" are the only encounters of special interest to the PCs. The doors of almost every building, including the central castle, have been locked, and the inhabitants refuse to acknowledge visitors. Marauding bands roam the streets, along with an occasional brave citizen. A random encounter table has also been provided in case the party explores areas not detailed. Wherever the PCs wander, they should eventually arrive at area F, as this is the hub of all the night's activity.

City Rumors

Roll 1d6 or select a rumor you believe is appropriate. Most of the rumors are either false or are only half-truths, so the accuracy of each statement is noted.

1. An old castle lies in the southwest part of town, the seat of city power before the new castle was raised. (True) An ancient, abandoned shrine of Thariz-dun lies within the castle. (False)
2. Lifeless husks of the city poor are laid to rest in the southwest ward. (True) But the place is cursed. At night, the dead cannot rest, and rise to haunt the ward. (False)
3. The city abounds with heretics and thieves. They pose as honest citizens by day, and work their evil by night. (True)
4. The southwest ward is home to the forgotten and outcast. (True)
5. Fiends will appear on the thresholds of heretics tonight, come to devour their souls. (False)
6. There is an abandoned armory near an old castle to the southwest. (True) It still brims with magical weapons, but the evil spirits of long-dead soldiers stand sentry over these treasures. (False).

Random Encounters

Random encounters occur on a 1 in 6, checked once a turn. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d6 again and consult the table below for a specific description. These encounters apply only after the heist has begun (see areas B and C below).

1. **Wandering marauding band,** of two Swordstorm fighters and two Hazenbane thieves. Use the "typical Hazenbane thief" and "typical Swordstorm fighter" entries to determine their statistics. All four are elaborately costumed as tanar'ri, and they may be persuaded to reveal the scheme and the location of the guild if threatened with death. These small bands attempt to avoid combat with obviously superior parties by fleeing. Only two such encounters are possible.

2. **Normal frightened citizen** (50% male, 50% female) running through the city on urgent business. Perhaps a child is sick, and the parent is running for clerical aid. If rerolled, "tanar'ri" have attacked the citizen's home, and the citizen is running in fear.

Average citizen: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 1-6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 7.

3. A **paladin of Rao** in pursuit of evil. He scans the party for evil PCs and insists on joining the PCs if they say that they are looking for thieves or tanar'ri. Only three such encounters are possible.

Paladin of Rao: AL LG; AC 2; MV 6; P 2-4; hp 6/level; THAC0 17-19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 19; plate mail, large shield, long sword.

4. The party comes across a **ransacked residence.** The family members inside have fainted in terror or are cringing in fear. A group of "tanar'ri" came and left a long while ago. The family members are unaware of where they went. They may relate stories that the "tanar'ri" flew away, as they thoroughly believe the hoax. Valuables worth 50-200 gp have been stolen.

5. The PCs come across a **ferocious dog** wandering the streets. If the PCs do not throw food, it will attack on sight.

Dog: INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S; ML 7; XP 35.

6. The PCs arrive while a **marauding band** is raiding a home. Refer to the first detailed random encounter for a description of the band. The family members are too frightened to put up any resistance. Only one such encounter is possible.

City Sites

A. The Temple of Rao. This is the temple that the party first visited in the introduction. Approximately 250′ square, its buttressed stone walls reach a height of 90′, and its five towers (one at each corner and in the center) reach over 120′. The open area around it is filled with gardens whose flowers are colorfully arrayed and carefully tended. Within the structure, stained glass windows provide adequate light, and more gardens are nestled in inner courtyards.

The head priest of the temple is currently away and has left his 13th-level disciple in charge. The 40 clerics in the temple are of varying levels. There are also 10 temple guards, all of whom are paladins between 1st and 9th level.

For more information on the order itself, refer to the sidebar.

B. Tannenbaum's Chalice. The PCs are referred to this clean, middle class inn by Joshua and other worshipers around the temple. If the party doesn't listen to the NPCs' suggestions, they will probably end up here anyway, as all other inns have already closed their doors for the night.

A stable adjoins the northeast side of the three-story establishment. A tavern occupies the first floor, and sleeping rooms may be rented on the top two floors. The rooms are separate from the tavern and can be reached only by an outside staircase running along the northwest side of the building. There are 10 rooms on each floor, each of which has a window that may be shuttered.

A night's lodging is only 15 sp per person, and there are enough rooms on the third floor to accommodate the entire party. This rate includes meals in the tavern, which tonight is empty of any other patrons. The proprietors and other inhabitants of the inn are all pious citizens and will not disturb the party.

In fact, only the barmaid, Georgina, and the bartender, Travis, engage them in any conversation. Georgina, a young and not very religious woman, talks candidly about how she considers the whole holy day rather silly, and Travis politely asks the PCs about their exploits. The PCs can then retire without event. But unknown to them, they are being watched intently throughout the evening.

As mentioned in the "Hazenbane" section, the bartender, Travis, is in fact the thief Navier. The presence of the PCs disturbs him because they are a possible threat to Hazenbane's scheme. During the evening, as he carefully engages the party in what appears to be merely polite conversation, he attempts to estimate the PCs' strength. He uses his words wisely so the party doesn't become aware of his intention.

When and if the party settles into their rooms to sleep, Navier jams the lock on the door that leads from the third-floor rooms to the outside staircase. He then goes off to prepare for the heist.

Several hours later, one of the PCs hears screams in the night. They are the distant screams of a woman crying for help from area C, and they last for a single round. Count carefully the number of rounds the party takes to wake up, gather gear (few people sleep in their armor), get out of the building, and run the 300′ to area C. The jammed lock on the exit door is a hindrance to the PCs. Treat it as a locked door, a barrier that requires PCs of exceptional strength, 30 hp damage from blunt or slashing weapons, or magic to open. If the PCs have the means, they may bypass the door by leaving via their third-floor windows.

Navier jammed the door to delay the PCs so he would have enough time to perform a heist nearby and leave without conflict (seven rounds).

Clues at the scene: During dinner, any close observer of Georgina may have seen that she was eyeing Travis (Navier) suspiciously all night. If questioned, she will tell the party that she distrusts him because once she saw him slip out of the inn late at night and head toward the seedier sections of town in the southwest. Otherwise, she knows nothing of his true profession.

C. Merchant's House. The screams come from this house, the residence of a devoutly religious middle-aged merchant named Reynaldo and his wife, Odalia. A one-story residence with two bedrooms, a kitchen, a washroom, and a parlor, it has a front entrance leading to the parlor and a back entrance from the kitchen. The house is wooden and well kept.

Odalia's screams ring out two hours before daybreak. Upon arrival, the PCs can see that the front door has been broken open. Navier has chosen this house as one of his targets. He forced entry with Fist, but if the PCs take more than eight rounds to arrive, the Hazenbane thieves have gotten away.

A horrid scene lies within. The doorway opens to a parlor, where furniture has been scattered about. Reynaldo is unconscious in a corner. He vainly struggled against the intruders before Fist knocked him out, but he awakens in two turns. If the PCs arrive in time, Odalia lies huddled in fright, crying near her husband. The PCs see Navier standing above her, considering whether or not to end her lamentations and her life. If the PCs are late, Odalia has simply fainted for three turns.

Navier carries a torch and is garbed entirely in black with a huge robe,

cloak, gloves, and boots. A large ape mask the size of a great helm is perched atop his head. In addition, Navier has rubbed the stench of carrion on his body to enhance the effect. Fist reeks just as much, and he is similarly clad except that his mask depicts an insect-creature. Spikes protrude everywhere from his armor.

If the party enters while these two are present, Navier faces them and uses all his acting ability to announce in a deep tone, "The night is ours, mortals. Flee the march of Tharizdun's minions! Our might will o'erwhelm thee, so run, ere lives are breathed adieu!" Navier might be convincing—so elaborately costumed, in the flickering torchlight—to a party that hasn't confronted tanar'ri before. Be careful to suggest to the party, if only through accurate description, that the thieves may in fact be tanar'ri. Do not say, "You see before you a man dressed in black wearing an ape mask," as the whole effect of the charade will be meaningless.

If the party continues to advance, Fist immediately attacks (if you are using the optional rules, he has prepared for a turn half an hour ago, and now enters berserker rage, raising his attack bonus to +3 and his damage bonus to +8). Fist fights to the death.

Meanwhile, Navier retreats to the far side of the room to hurl daggers at the party. If Fist does well against the group, Navier will later engage in melee. If it is obvious that the party is far stronger than Fist, Navier flees through the house and out a back door. Navier does not respond to interrogation, and Fist can't speak much Common (in berserker rage he isn't capable of anything but killing or being killed).

Odalia and Reynaldo are quite frightened, but some careful persuasion can convince them of the true nature of the robbers. Both are very thankful, but considering the damage Navier and Fist have caused to the house, they can't spare anything more than thanks.

Navier has a large sack containing 17 sp, 12 ep, 34 gp, 12 pp, a necklace worth 25 gp, six pieces of silverware worth 15 gp each, a ring valued at 40 gp, and a jeweled armband worth 60 gp. The necklace, silverware, and platinum belong to Reynaldo and he wants them back.

Reynaldo and **Odalia:** AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 4 (1 with wounds), 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 8.

Clues at the Scene: There are two clues in this encounter that may help the PCs discover the location of the thieves' headquarters. The first is the stench of carrion surrounding Navier and Fist. Any city resident can tell the party that a mass graveyard is located in the walled southwestern ward, or the PCs may have already heard rumors of this sort. Although this clue is subtle, an intuitive party may be able to make a connection.

In addition, if questioned about the actions of the two intruders, Odalia will recall that she heard the ape-creature whisper a few words to the insect while they were looting. She remembers the ape speaking in simple broken Common (so Fist could understand): "You—I . . . afterward split up . . . back to the armory . . ." There are two armories in the city but the majority of the populace is aware of only one of them, located in the castle in the city's center. If city guardsmen are questioned, however, they can tell the PCs the location of an abandoned armory (area F) in the southwest ward. This is the den of Hazenbane.

D. Caravan Camp. This large, grassy field serves as a campground for the many caravans that pass through Veluna City daily. A total of 40 wagons and 150 people are camped here, along with their horses and oxen. When the PCs leave area C, they hear the screams and shouts of frantic campers and animals. Anastasia has loosed the horses and oxen, allowing them to stampede all over the grounds as a distraction while she attempts to steal from the tents. Many of the caravans harbor pilgrims, and to frighten them Anastasia is also disguised with black garb, a vulture mask, and carrion stench. The two Swordstorm mercenaries with her wear dog-faced masks.

The PCs may help the owners round up and pacify the 60 or so beasts that are loose. If they look closely (Wisdom check on 1d20), the PCs may spot the Swordstorm mercenaries trying vainly to emulate Anastasia in her stealth. If engaged, the thief and the mercenaries will fight the party until they reach half hit points, then flee or surrender.

Anastasia carries a large sack containing 23 sp, 57 gp, and 3 gems worth 50 gp, 25 gp, and 10 gp.

Swordstorm mercenaries (2): AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 13, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 65; long sword (specialized), chain mail.

Clues at the Scene: There are no true clues at this scene. However, if captured and promised her freedom, Anastasia will tell the party Vaughan's plan and even where the guild is located. She is tired of Vaughan's schemes, and with her freedom, she flees the city to start life anew.

There are no more screams to lead the PCs from one encounter area to another. The rumors, the clues at Reynaldo's residence, and the possible interrogation of Anastasia should be enough to lead the PCs to the abandoned armory. If they haven't caught on yet, allow them to continue roaming the city, and use the random encounter tables provided above. They may be able to elicit information from other bands of thieves, or resourceful PCs may follow a band as it makes its way back to the armory after an evening of heists. Eventually, all the Hazenbane thieves and Swordstorm fighters return to the armory.

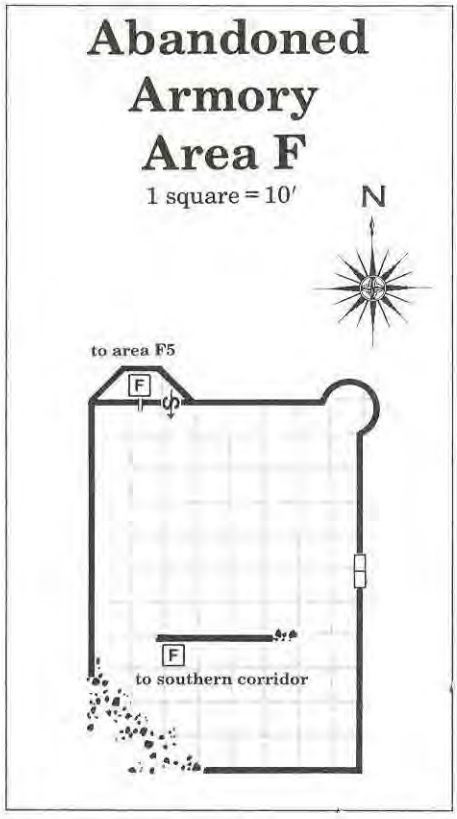
E. Moneychanger's Shop. This is the shop of a wealthy moneychanger named Starke. Tonight, it is also the site of an attempted heist by Hazenbane. If the party wanders within 300′ of this building they hear a loud crash, repeated every 10 seconds for one minute.

Dongul and Tarquin are attempting to ram the front door open with a huge stake. If the party follows the sounds to their source, Dongul and Tarquin will have smashed through the portal by the time the PCs arrive. The party sees two black figures (one with a naked skull where its head should be and the other a dragon-headed monster) drop a huge stake, draw swords, and march into the shop.

The two sentries posted to guard the vault clash with the intruders in the front office. However, Dongul and Tarquin far overmatch them. By the time the PCs arrive, both sentries are almost dead.

Sentries (2): AL LN; AC 7; MV 9; F2; hp 13 (5 when PCs arrive), 11 (6); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; studded leather armor, halberd.

As the PCs near, Tarquin (with the skull mask) leaves Dongul (in the black dragon mask) to fight the guards alone while he engages the party. He fires his sling at the lead fighter (he uses a bola if the *CFH* rules are in effect), then



rushes to engage the PCs with his sword. Tarquin has suffered only 4 hp damage from the previous encounter. If brought under 10 hp he flees, but he fights to the death if cornered.

Dongul takes two rounds to dispatch the first sentry; the following round he slays the last one. Then he rushes to aid Tarquin. Dongul flees if he reaches 9 hp, but he will surrender if cornered. When the party arrives he has suffered 8 hp damage; he is unscathed by the melee with the sentries. Dongul carries a sack containing 12 sp, 11 ep, and 212 gp.

If the PCs defeat Dongul and Tarquin and enter the building to survey the damage or aid the wounded guards, another Hazenbane thief in a froglike mask runs by and hurl a flask of flaming oil into their midst from across the street. As he readies another flask, the thief is wounded by an armored man on a horse, who gallops up and intercepts him. The thief flees to safety.

Hazenbane thief: AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; T3; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; XP 120; leather armor, short sword, four flasks of oil.

Dismounting from his horse with sword drawn, the armored warrior cautiously approaches the party. He is Sir Jean-Pierre, a paladin of the Holy Knights of Rao. After scanning the party for evil, he demands to know the circumstances of the encounter. Jean-Pierre softens his attitude toward good PCs who relate information about the guild. After insisting on accompanying the party to the thieves' headquarters, he heals one of the PCs by laying on hands. Jean-Pierre can also, for a small donation, get the party access to healing magic at the Temple of Rao for their good deeds. If the party refuses his aid, he becomes offended and rides off to vanquish the guild himself.

Sir Jean-Pierre: AL LG; AC 2; MV 6; P4; hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 13, C 15, I 14, W 16, Ch 17; ML 19; plate mail, normal shield, long sword.

The moneychanger's front office features a small barred transaction window leading to the back office. A locked door also leads to the back office. Beyond the office, a secret door leads downstairs to the vault, shut by an iron-bound and triple-locked portal. There are assorted currencies worth 4,000 gp in the vault.

Clues at the scene: There are no clues here except what the party can gain from interrogation. Dongul speaks only if threatened with certain death, and Tarquin won't open his mouth at all.

F. Abandoned Armory. Veluna City's walled southwestern ward is known as the Dim District. The large walled structure in the district's center was once the city castle, though it has now fallen into disrepair. The ruins of the castle are visible from any portion of the city.

The Dim District is haven to the lowest tiers of Veluna's citizens: beggars, prostitutes, gangs, and thieves—people the nobles would like to forget. The whole district was recently walled in to contain the ghetto of poverty-stricken souls and to keep the stench out of other parts of town.

An abandoned armory located east of the old castle is the den of Hazenbane. In secret underground passageways that were used to store arms, the thieves have built their headquarters, protected by a network of traps.

The ghetto wall's gates are closed and unmanned on this night, but small holes large enough to permit passage exist in many places along the wall. The PCs must walk through rows of hastily erected shacks and tenements to reach their destination. Children and the elderly, each with a tale of woe to tell, all line up to beg the party for alms. All of them disappear when the PCs approach the castle, as 400′ east of it lies a large field used by the city as a mass graveyard for paupers. It lies close enough to Hazenbane's headquarters to keep the general populace away, but far enough to not discomfit the thieves overmuch.

A Swordstorm archer watches the party from the old castle's walls, 150′ west of the armory (see the Veluna City map). From the cover of crumbling battlements (75% hidden, −7 to AC) he fires arrows at the party as soon as they are within 100′ of the armory (medium range). He continues firing until the PCs enter the armory or castle, or he runs out of arrows. Pursuit of the archer is futile, as he has a host of familiar towers and rooms to retreat to.

Swordstorm archer: AL LE; AC 5 (−2 under cover); MV 9; F2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1 (2 with bow); Dmg by weapon type; SD 75% cover; ML 12; XP 65; long bow (specialized), 24 arrows, dagger, chain mail.

Part of the armory is choked with rubble. Its double doors are barred from within; these doors take 65 hp slashing or bludgeoning damage before opening.

As the party approaches, Guildmaster Vaughan watches them through a peephole in the northern alcove. The secret door that leads to the alcove is large and unwieldy; it can be opened only by somebody inside the alcove itself. Vaughan opens the door as the party enters. He releases war dogs on the group, then shuts the portal quickly and watches the scene through his peephole. Even in the dim light, Vaughan can easily tell that the PCs are not returning thieves or mercenaries because the archer sentry in the castle would have given a special call to ask him to open the door.

The dogs are vicious and hungry but will not attack Vaughan. The party can delay them for one round if they hurl two days' worth of rations at them.

War dogs (3): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 14, 12, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 8; XP 65; MC1.

The armory building is 20′ high and empty. Because the secret door is not accessible, the only other exit is a trap-

door near the south west corner of the armory floor. If the party goes down this shaft, Vaughan uses the trapdoor in his alcove, descending a ladder that leads to area F5, a guild meeting room that lies beneath the armory (see the Guild Headquarters map).

The PCs' shaft widens to 10', with the metal rungs of a ladder set against the wall. Take careful note of the order in which the PCs descend the 60' shaft and the spacing between them. When the first PC reaches 30', the ladder suddenly falls apart, sending everyone on it plummeting the remainder of the height. The shaft ends in a passageway, but the section of floor in the passageway right below the shaft is made of thin, weak boards. Anyone falling from 10' above breaks these boards and plummets an additional 30' into a pit beneath the floor. Thus, PCs descending 30' when the ladder breaks suffer 3d6 hp from the subsequent drop to the pit. The trick to bypassing this trap is to use a rope instead of the ladder to descend. The boards that cover the pit do not break under anyone who falls less than 10'.

The remainder of the floor is stable. The ceilings of these underground rooms and tunnels are 10' tall, and there are no random encounters.

Guild Headquarters

Areas F1-F9 are located beneath the abandoned armory and serve as the headquarters for Hazenbane. Refer to the Guild Headquarters map for this section.

F1. Trapped Door. The door to this chamber is thick and made of wood. The lock on it is complex (−15% to pick) and has a poison needle trap (poison type D). Anyone attempting to ram the door open with a shoulder may be in for quite a surprise, because the door is hollow and lined with a layer of sharp spikes. The unfortunate PC suffers 2-8 hp damage, plus bonuses granted for his Strength.

The room beyond is bare and dusty.

F2. Glints and Guillotines. A tripwire lies across the opening of the passage entering this room. If tripped, it causes a mechanism to send a spear flying from the opposite wall at a height of 4' toward the first PC in the marching order. The spear does 1d6 +2 hp damage if a saving throw vs. paralyzation is failed.

The room beyond is dusty and littered with cobwebs and bones. With a bit of light, the party can see a glint from the west wall. Further examination reveals it comes from a small 2' × 2' × 2' niche in the middle of the wall, 4' up. Even more examination is needed to determine the contents. Anything placed into the niche (like a sword or a hand) breaks a fine network of threads and sets off a guillotine trap. Luckily, the guillotine blade is rusty, so it cannot sever limbs, but anyone failing a saving throw vs. wands suffers 3-12 hp damage. The glint in the niche comes from a single gold piece.

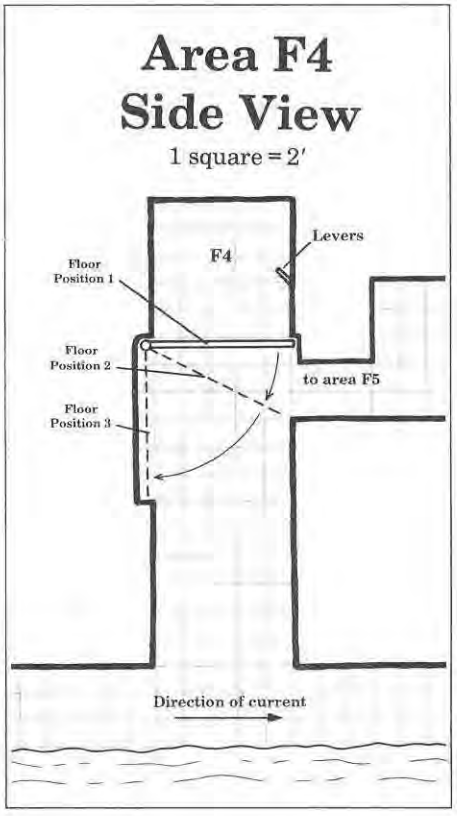
F3. Second Trapped Door. The door to this room is identical to the one at area F1. The room itself is also bare and dusty.

F4. Lever Room. Refer to the cross-section diagram for more detail on this area. The trap is quite complex, so be sure you are thoroughly familiar with it before springing it on a party.

This chamber is bare except for a pair of wooden levers in the center of the eastern wall. Both levers are in the up position. If either one is pulled down alone, the entire floor of the chamber instantly swing to position 3 (see diagram). PCs in the room fall 30' into a raging underground river, suffering 1-6 hp damage unless they have the swimming proficiency and make an ability check at a penalty of −2. Only the PC who actually pulled the lever can avoid falling by making a saving throw vs. paralyzation at −4. If the saving throw is made, the PC can hold onto the lever.

Any PCs who fall into the water must make Dexterity checks (those without the swimming proficiency make these checks at −2). Those who have the swimming proficiency but fail the Dexterity check are washed downriver for one mile, where they emerge aboveground outside the city, sputtering but alive. Those who do not have the swimming proficiency and fail the check drown, as the water is over 10' deep. Spells, air bladders, or other makeshift rafts may save the PC at the DM's option.

Any PC who makes a successful ability check can hang onto a tiny ledge of rock with his lower body in the river. However, the current is strong, and the PC can only hold on for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution before being carried away.

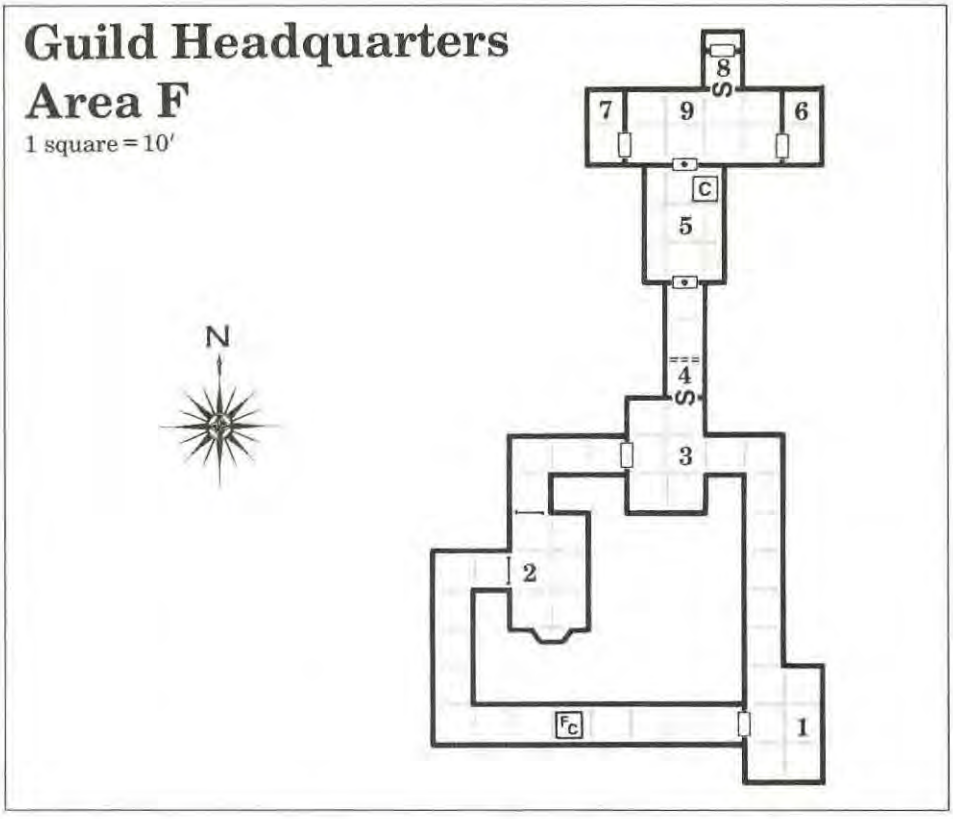


The floor glides back to position 1 in two rounds. Anyone holding onto a lever must make two successive Strength checks to maintain the hold until the floor returns. If either of these checks fails, the PC falls into the water and suffers the same fate as everyone else. When the floor does return, the lever rises to the up position, even with a PC holding it.

If both levers are pulled at the same time, the floor slowly descends to position 2 (see diagram), acting as a ramp to the opening of a passage leading to area F5, with only a few inches separating the opening and the edge of the floor. It stays in this position for one turn before returning to position 1.

If the second lever is pulled after the first one has dropped the floor to position 3, both levers detach from the wall, sending hanging PCs plummeting. The floor returns to position 2 after one round, closing off any escape for at least one turn.

The sides of the pit are rough but slick with water. Thieves attempting to climb out of the water suffer a −10% penalty to their climb-walls checks. If the floor is in



position 2, the passageway leading to area F5 cannot be reached from below.

F5. Guild Meeting Room. The door to this room is locked but not trapped. A long table with 12 chairs dominates the room, and an unlit hooded lantern hangs from the ceiling. Maps of Veluna City and the surrounding territory cover the walls, and a ladder along the south wall goes up a 70′ shaft, emerging in the northern alcove of the armory. On the northern wall is a wooden lever that also controls the floor of area F4. If the lever is pushed up, the floor drops to position 3. If the lever is pulled halfway down, the floor moves to position 2, and if the lever is pulled all the way down, the floor returns to position 1. This lever overrides the levers in area F4, and it moves to match whatever position the floor is in.

This is the main meeting hall for Hazenbane. When the thieves gather, they are admitted by Vaughan through the northern alcove and descend here to deliberate.

When the party arrives, there is no one in this room.

F6. Storeroom. Vaughan keeps food and other necessities in this small storeroom. Black clothing and horrid masks are piled in a corner. The masks depict a spiny reptile, a blonde boar, a tiger, a black leather skull with a single horn, and a blue-furred bear. The only items of notable value are three bottles of wine worth 25 gp each.

F7. Bathroom. This is a bathroom and latrine, worked in marble and richly furnished. Everything of value, like the bathtub, is too large to be moved, however. Water is pumped up from the underground river, and waste goes down chutes to enter the river at a point farther downstream.

F8. Vault. The back wall of this 10′ × 10′ chamber has an iron-bound triple-locked door made of bronzewood, with a poison needle trap on each lock (poison type D). The door itself opens after 100 hp damage from slashing and bludgeoning weapons are done to it, but because of its durability, for every two rounds of bashing, the weapon used must make a saving throw vs. normal blow or be dulled (−1 to attack and damage rolls to a minimum of 1 hp damage). Magical weapons make saving throws with bonuses equal to their attack roll modifiers.

Beyond the door is a vault, a tiny alcove with shelves and drawers from floor to ceiling. The seven shelves and three drawers contain wealth stolen from the citizens of Veluna:

— Three small sacks with 100 gp each. The amount is marked on the outside of each sack.

— Three sacks with 200 ep each, the amount marked.

— Three sacks with 500 sp each, the amount marked.

— An unmarked sack containing 14 pp, 37 gp, 64 ep, and 378 sp.

— 31 pieces of silverware worth 1-20 gp each.

— A small chest with nine pieces of jewelry worth 10-60 gp each, and a black sack with seven gems worth 10-40 gp each.

— Bags of spices weighing 10 lbs. in all and worth 200 gp total.

The first drawer is not locked. It contains three long swords with jeweled scabbards and pommels, each worth 150 gp. Unknown to Vaughan, one of the blades is a *sword of the planes.* It does not radiate magic on the Prime Material plane. A jeweled dagger worth 50 gp and an enameled shield worth 25 gp are kept beneath the swords.

The second drawer is locked. It contains three illuminated copies of the *Word of Incarum,* worth 100 gp each. Vaughan was tempted to burn these books but changed his mind when he heard an estimate of their value. An unlocked coffer contains a ring worth 400 gp and a ruby worth 250 gp.

The third drawer is locked and trapped with poison gas (save at −2 or suffer 10 hp damage from fumes that radiate in a 10′ × 10′ × 10′ cloud). Within is a magnificent painting depicting Hieroneous, the god of justice, surrounded by his knights on pegasi and doing battle with the undead hordes of his evil brother, Hextor, all in a realm of clouds at sunrise. This painting is over 200 years old. Art experts will recognize this work and offer 10,000 gp for it in auction. It is doubtful that any of the PCs will realize its worth unless they have a background in art history. The painting itself is large and unwieldy, its 4′ × 5′ frame and 30 lb. weight barely fitting in the large drawer. Anastasia stole it two months ago from the villa of

a wealthy merchant in Verbobonc.

F9. Vaughan's Quarters. Beyond this room's locked door, five people wait to ambush the party. None of them are costumed as their comrades in the city are. A Hazenbane thief is hiding beneath a large poster bed on the south wall. A Swordstorm archer waits behind two overturned couches in the northeast corner. Captain Charles and another Swordstorm fighter wait in area F7, the bathroom. Vaughan is hidden in a small alcove above the door, covered by tapestries.

The order of the ambush is as follows: The first PC to enter is fired on by the archer, who stays under the cover of the overturned couches. The archer shoots as long as he can and engages in melee with his sword when he must.

The floor of the room is covered with a large rug. When several PCs have entered, possibly to engage the archer, the Hazenbane thief comes out from under the bed and pulls hard on the edge of the rug. All PCs standing more than 5' from the bed must make saving throws vs. paralyzation at +2 or fall.

Once this is done, Captain Charles and the Swordstorm fighter rush from area F7 to attack. Prone PCs suffer a penalty of −3 to initiative.

When it seems like every party member has entered, Vaughan drops from the alcove and attempts to backstab the nearest PC (probably the one in the rear of the marching order).

As the combat progresses, all the attackers except Vaughan will surrender if reduced to one-quarter of their normal hit points. Vaughan makes sure he is near the door at all times. If things go badly for him, Vaughan retreats to area F5, smashing a vial of acid on the threshold between areas F5 and F9 to hinder pursuit. He pulls the lever in area F5 to the down position and runs to the pit, diving into the river and swimming to safety outside the city.

Swordstorm archer: AL LE; AC 5 (1 under cover); MV 9; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (2 with bow); Dmg by weapon type; SD 50% cover; ML 11; XP 120; short bow (specialized), 12 arrows, short sword, chain mail.

Swordstorm fighter: AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 65; long sword (specialized), chain mail.

Hazenbane thief: AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; T3; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; XP 65; broad sword, leather armor.

After the battle ends, the party may look around this chamber. They find it elaborately furnished but in disarray. This is the residence of Vaughan himself, and being of noble breeding, he is accustomed to surrounding himself with luxury. The Baklunish rug is exquisitely made, worth up to 500 gp to collectors. It weighs 20 lbs. The two overturned couches and poster bed are well made, but the PCs probably won't have time to haul them aboveground to sell (they are worth 150 gp each).

A desk, armoire, and wardrobe stand against the north wall. While many of the items within them are just personal effects, the desk does contain ledgers recording guild accounts. This information is valuable to the town watch, though no reward is given. If the PCs fail to turn the ledgers over to the watch, Sir Jean-Pierre (if with the party) will take the liberty of doing so. The only other furnishings in this room are lit braziers and a table set with a flask of wine and goblets.

Concluding the Adventure

If Jean-Pierre is with the PCs when they open the vault, he insists that the authorities be notified so the contents may be returned to their owners. Whether or not the PCs comply (or if Jean-Pierre is not with the party), the Holy Knights of Rao soon look into this matter and discover Hazenbane's den, pursuing the PCs with all the zeal of an order of paladins if the PCs keep all the treasure for themselves. If the PCs do report this matter, they will be allowed to keep everything in the complex and the contents of all the shelves, plus the contents of the first drawer in area F8.

Two hours after the party enters the armory, the remainder of the mercenaries and thieves return, laden with treasures. If the northern alcove's secret door is not opened within one round of their arrival, they become suspicious and leave with their booty, never to return. Simply dispersing the Hazenbane guild is worth a story goal award of 4,000 XP, to be split among the party.

But this does not have to be the end. If Vaughan escaped, the PCs have an enemy for quite some time. From the moment he hit the water, he began plotting against the party.

This module also provides a great deal of background for other adventures. A ruined stronghold of the followers of Tharizdun is the setting of TSR's adventure module WG4 *The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*. For much higher-level parties, a quest for the Crook of Rao (as mentioned in the excerpt from the *Word of Incarum*) is the subject of WG6 *Isle of the Ape*.

But as far as Hazenbane goes, the guild cannot function without Vaughan's leadership. When the PCs return to the city, they find that in its dying breath Hazenbane has hit dozens of sites, doing a great deal of damage in the process. Given time, Veluna City comes to realize that the looters were only thieves and not the wrath of Rao. Of course, the doctrine of the order will not change. Ω

OLD MAN KATAN AND THE INCREDIBLE, EDIBLE, DANCING MUSHROOM BAND

BY TED JAMES THOMAS ZUVICH

We can't describe it. Just read it.

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

The author writes: "I would like to thank my two cats, Roman and Stewart, for providing the behavioral model for Hlaupa in this adventure. As always, many thanks to JRD for his invaluable critiquing skills. I hope that all you DMs and players have as much fun playing this adventure as I did writing it. Let me know how it turns out."

Campaign got you down? Orc-slaying getting to be just a little too grim? Feeling the need for a laugh (with a bite)? "Old Man Katan and the Incredible, Edible, Dancing Mushroom Band" is a light-hearted AD&D® adventure for 4-6 PCs of levels 1-6, with a minimum of six total party levels (but preferably around 18 total party levels). One of the PCs should be a ranger, and a bard can be helpful to the PC group.

This adventure provides comic relief in an otherwise serious campaign. The situation presented herein is ridiculous, but it does have its own twisted internal logic. Throughout this scenario, emphasis is placed on role-playing and problem solving. This adventure can be adapted for use in any campaign, and it can also be used as a side-event in a longer wilderness adventure.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

When he was a young man, Katan was a successful cattle buyer in the busy port city of Volkrad. One fateful day, Katan got fed up with a fellow merchant who was playing dirty in order to corner the cattle market. Katan lost his temper (he always was a bit touchy) and ran the fellow through with his sword. It was the only time in his life that he made a killing in the stock market. Now killing someone would have been bad enough, but in this case the situation was much worse. The merchant was an intimate of several high-ranking members of Volkrad's thieves' guild.

When he regained control of his temper and realized what he had done, Katan decided that a change of scenery might be good for his health. He developed a yearning for the rustic simplicity of country life, quickly converted his properties to cash, and moved away from Volkrad. Katan ended his flight on the misty shores of the Glitchegumee Swamp, a spot quite isolated from Volkrad and its high-pressure businesses. He built himself a humble brick cottage on the edge of the swamp and

settled in. He remained in the swamp for more than 30 years; people in Volkrad have long memories.

Katan has never regretted his decision to leave Volkrad. He's still alive, for one thing. The fishing in the swamp is great, and no one complains when he indulges in his two bad habits: singing in the bath, and smoking cigars filled with the most vile, raunchy, and nauseating home-grown tobacco imaginable. Recently, however, events have conspired to disturb Katan's idyllic lifestyle.

Two months ago, some strange mushroom creatures came out of the swamp and began hanging around Katan's cottage. During the night, 10-20 of the mobile, 2'-tall mushrooms sit outside his bedroom window and warble in their piercing, off-key voices. Needless to say, the shrill singing keeps him awake all night and invariably leaves him in a foul mood the next day. The mushrooms also play terrible practical jokes on Katan. Sometimes they even follow him when he goes fishing, where their singing scares the fish away. Despite his best efforts, Katan has not been able to drive the mushroom creatures away from his cottage.

These events have their roots in an incident that took place more than 200 years ago. At that time, the Glitchegumee Swamp was the site of a ferocious battle between orcs and humans. Many warriors on both sides died, and most of the bodies were lost in the swamp and never recovered. One of those unlucky soldiers carried a potion of *growth* in a hip-flask. Three months ago (relative to the present time) the slowly corrosive environment of the Glitchegumee Swamp finally eroded a hole in the dead soldier's flask. The potion leaked into a pool of stagnant water that was the breeding ground of hundreds of mosquito larvae. Surprisingly, the potion still worked, even after 200 years in the swamp. The potion transformed the mosquito larvae into giant mosquito larvae. Time and something in the mucky water warped the potion of *growth* so that the change became permanent.

The newly hatched mosquitoes quickly grew until they were the size of large robins. As they grew and fed, the mosquitoes began laying waste to the local wildlife. The rampaging mosquitoes soon attracted the attention of the local Bog Monster (a type of shambling mound). With a little experimentation, the Bog Monster found that it was able to control the mosquitoes. Like any small child (the Bog Monster has the maturity of a four-year-old human) suddenly presented with a new and fascinating toy, the Bog Monster concentrated all of its attention on its new plaything. It took great delight in watching the frantic actions of other swamp creatures as they attempted to escape from the giant mosquitoes. Under the Bog Monster's influence, the mosquitoes quickly drove most of the wildlife out of the swamp.

Now the Bog Monster wonders where all its former playmates have gone, and it is becoming bored with the mindless appetite of the mosquitoes. Because the Bog Monster lacks sufficient wisdom to foresee the consequences of its actions, it has not made the connection between the mosquitoes and the disappearance of all the other swamp creatures.

The mushroom creatures plaguing Old Man Katan are known to sages as campestris; they are swamp-dwelling relatives of the mushroom-men (myconids) described in the *Monstrous Compendium*, volume 2. The campestris were chased out of their original territory, deep in the swamp, by the giant mosquitoes and the Bog Monster. The mosquitoes are not deadly to the campestris (as they are to most wildlife), but they are annoying. And the campestris knew that they needed help to deal with this menace to the swamp.

The campestris started hanging around Katan because his smelly cigar smoke keeps the mosquitoes away. Over the last few months, the mushrooms have become very attached to Katan, and now they love him very much. They like to sit outside his window and imitate his singing, just to show him how much they love him. The mobile mushrooms follow Katan into the swamp so they can warn him when the mosquitoes are nearby; that is when they start singing and squealing at Katan. The campestris have learned that if they start singing, Katan will quit fishing in disgust and light a cigar.

Running the Adventure

At the start of this adventure, the PCs meet Old Man Katan and learn about the campestris. They also have the opportunity to learn that something may be wrong in the swamp. Several short encounters detail the swamp and its inhabitants. In the climax of the adventure, the PCs encounter the Bog Monster of the Glitchegumee Swamp.

In the sections dealing with Old Man Katan and with the Bog Monster, play centers on the PCs' interacting with an NPC whose actions are not rigidly defined. The adventure text gives notes on the NPC's personality and views, but the DM is expected to use this information to act the part well. This approach allows the DM great flexibility in responding to player decisions and actions. It also requires that the DM spend at least a few moments prior to the gaming session thinking about what Katan and the Bog Monster would be likely to do in any situation.

Beginning the Adventure

It is a fine summer morning in July, and Old Man Katan is having a bath in his front yard, in a large metal tub that he uses for just that purpose. Katan is sitting in the tub, happily bellowing out songs at the top of his aging lungs. Ten of the ever-present campestris are playing decoy, sitting on the lawn in front of him and singing along in the ear-grating voices that are the best imitation they can manage of Katan's unique singing style.

While the decoy-mushrooms continue to sing, four more campestris sneak out of the bushes behind Katan and steal his clothing. Just before the clothes-stealing campestris disappear into the bushes, one of them turns around and whistles at Katan. Katan immediately jumps out of the tub and gives chase to the mobile mushrooms, who scatter all over, giggling the entire time. The mushrooms, far more agile than Katan, keep him running around for at least 15 minutes. The campestris have decided that Katan has not been getting enough exercise. He is slender and fit right now, and the campestris aim to keep him that way.

To start the adventure, read or paraphrase the following introduction to the players. The PCs should be traveling somewhere near a large saltwater swamp, perhaps going along a rarely traveled road that leads from one town to another, or simply wandering in search of adventure.

> When you first heard the bellowing, you assumed that either several bull alligators were fighting nearby, or someone was in agonizing pain. Now you have discovered the truth behind

The Swamp Hermit

Old Man Katan: AL NG; AC 10; MV 9; R10; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT ½; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 12, C 13, I 13, W 16, Ch 10; HS 63%, MS 78%; short sword, club, dagger, light crossbow (+1 on all attack rolls); Nonweapon proficiencies: animal handling, animal lore, cooking, line-fishing, musical instrument (harmonica), read/write Common, tracking (+3), wilderness survival (swamp, +2); Spells (at third level): *animal friendship, pass without trace, goodberry.*

Katan is 62 years old, 5'10" tall, with white hair and brown eyes. His THAC0 is low because he has the powers and abilities of a 10th-level ranger (tracking, spells, animal empathy, etc.), but he is not good in hand-to-hand combat, having had very little training in this area.

Old Man Katan is an acerbic old coot of a hermit with several annoying habits and idiosyncrasies, and some equally redeeming qualities. The DM should have a good time role-playing Katan. Just relax and cut loose. Imagine what you would be like if you had been living alone in a swamp for 30 years!

Katan is not used to conversing with people. He is abrupt and apt to say just about anything that is on his mind, without thought for whom it might offend. Katan starts nearly every sentence with a few "harumphs" and throat-clearing noises, just to get himself warmed up to speak.

Old Man Katan is also going slightly deaf in his old age. He has trouble hearing high-pitched noises. For example, he cannot hear the buzzing of mosquito wings, nor can he discern some of the campestris' high-pitched squeaks. Katan may have trouble hearing a PC who has a high-pitched voice (such as a female PC), which can lead to some interesting role-playing opportunities. It may appear as if Katan is deliberately and rudely ignoring the PC, when in fact he simply cannot hear her unless she speaks very loudly.

the noises that lured you off the road and into the Glitchegumee Swamp. Several hundred yards off the main road, you found a small, neatly constructed brick cottage. You are sitting in the bushes by the house, watching a white-haired old man singing in the bath. Or trying to sing. The old man is apparently utterly tone deaf and unfortunately possessed of a very strong set of lungs.

The DM can demonstrate Katan's singing by shouting a pop song at the top of his lungs, as off-key as possible.

But wait! Suddenly, a dozen 2'-tall, brown-and-white spotted mushrooms scamper out of the bushes on the right of the bathtub and start singing along with the old man in the tub, who seems to accept this incredible event as an everyday occurrence. The mushrooms bob and weave as their faint tenor voices trail along with the old man's demonically off-key yowling. The mushrooms are obviously trying to imitate the old man, but nonetheless, their off-key warbling is not as bad as the old man's howling.

Suddenly, a piercing whistle blasts through the turgid, reeking air of the swamp (strongly reminiscent of the odor of sweat-socks). The sound comes from right behind the bathtub. The old man whirls around just as a mushroom disappears into the bushes with the last of his clothing. In a thunderous voice, he yells, "Come back here with my clothes, you thieving little varmints! Come here, you!"

Shouting dire threats, the old man leaps out of the tub, wearing only a towel, and gives chase to the mushrooms. The mushrooms zip back and forth across the lawn, their rootballs working furiously as they zig and zag to avoid the old man. They make noises that can only be described as high-pitched giggling. The skinny old man curses the mushrooms at the top of his powerful lungs while simultaneously trying to hold the towel around his waist and bash one of the mushrooms in the "head" with a club.

"You stinking little refugees from a salad! Stand still, you slimy dang critters!" he shouts. Despite the red-faced old geezer's best efforts, it appears that none of the giggling mushrooms are in imminent danger of being hit.

Let the players describe their characters' actions for the next round. If any of the PCs step out of the bushes or make a loud noise (such as laughter), the old man in the towel comes to a dead stop and emits a startled squawk. He stares at the PCs for a second, then bolts inside the nearby cottage and slams the door behind him. The mobile mushrooms lay down on the emerald-green lawn and laugh harder than ever, writhing and wiggling as they do so. If they were men, it would look as if they were kicking and wiggling on the ground, holding their ribs and laughing as hard as they could.

If the PCs leave, the adventure ends here. If they go forward and knock on the cabin door, continue with the following section.

Are You Hit Men?

Katan made the honest (if somewhat paranoid) mistake of assuming that the PCs are hit men sent out from Volkrad to get him, finally. This is an understandable error, considering that the PCs probably have a rather warlike appearance. Give the PCs a few moments to ask questions about what the campestris are doing. During this time, the campestris lie on the ground and laugh. They run away into the bushes if anyone tries to touch them, zooming between the PC's legs to escape if necessary.

If any of the PCs ask about the old man during this time, tell them that someone is scurrying around inside the cottage closing all of the window shutters, and that loud clanking noises can be heard coming from inside the building. Then read or paraphrase the following information to the players:

You've been observing the antics of the strange mushroom creatures for a few moments when you hear the old man shout from the upstairs cottage window. "Go back to Volkrad, you rotten-hearted assassin scum! Go home and tell your bosses that you couldn't get me, or by all the gods above, I swear that I'll take at least half-a-dozen of you with me!"

The old man pokes a crossbow out the slightly open window. Its ugly snout is firmly pointed in your direction. "I got the last batch of you bozos," shouts the old man, "and I'll get you too!"

This is a tricky situation for the DM to handle, and it requires a delicate touch. If the PCs are provoked into killing Katan (and they have reason to be upset), the adventure ends here.

If the PCs want to speak with the old man, they will have to convince Katan that they are not hit men sent out from Volkrad. Award a bonus of 200 XP, split among all the PCs, if players come up with a peaceful way to convince Katan to come out of his cottage. Applying a logical argument should suffice, if it is well role-played. Examples of arguments that could convince Katan that the PCs are not hit men are the following:

- If we were assassins, we would have shot you while you were taking your bath.
- If we were assassins, you never would have known we were here until it was too late.
- Do you think that any self-respecting assassin's guild would send out half-a-dozen assassins to nail one scrawny old man?

Once the PCs have convinced Old Man Katan that they are not assassins, Katan visibly relaxes. He gruffly apologizes for his lack of manners and seems quite sheepish.

Katan's Raving Tale

In order to make amends for any hard feelings caused by his earlier display of hostility, Katan offers to put the PCs up for the night and cook them a meal. If the PCs accept his offer, Katan cooks the PCs a fine meal of local swamp delicacies. After the meal, if the PCs appear to be interested in hearing about the mushrooms, Katan leans back, pours himself a drink, and tells the PCs some of what he's experienced.

Katan's observations about the campestris and their habits are listed below. Ideally, you should role-play through this exchange of information, not simply read this list to the players. Remember that, although Katan does not know exactly what the campestris are (indeed, he does not even know their proper name, referring to them as "dag-nabbed critters!"), he has had over a month to observe their habits. Like most rangers, Katan has keen powers of observation.

- The mushroom creatures started hanging around his cottage about a month and a half ago, and they have been making pests out of themselves ever since.
- The creatures sit outside the cottage at night, just below his bedroom window, and sing. Their squealing, nasal voices keep him awake all night. Katan says, "I tried to teach them to sing nicely, but I think the poor little creatures are tone deaf." The campestris do not sing outside his window every night; at the most, they sing one night in three. Katan has not been able to find out how the mushrooms make their noises. (The campestris sing outside Katan's window only when the giant mosquitoes are nearby, and they sound tone deaf only because they are imitating Katan, who has the singing ability of your average boulder. Katan can hear the campestris only when they sing in low tones; he cannot hear high-pitched noises.)
- The mushrooms sneak up on Katan during his afternoon siestas and wake him up. They also play terrible practical jokes on him, such as stealing his clothes while he is taking a bath. (Most of their practical jokes are aimed at making sure Katan gets enough exercise.)
- A few of the mushrooms always follow him around when he goes fishing. They jump in the water, run around, and tease his boat. They never sit still for a minute while they are in the swamp. Sometimes they sing in the swamp, which scares all the fish away. They will not stop singing until Katan lights a cigar. (The campestris are just protecting Katan from the mosquitoes).
- Katan thinks that the campestris scared away all of the big fish in the swamp, because he has not caught anything meal-sized since the mushrooms started hanging around. His cat, Hlaupa, also disappeared about a week ago, and he has not found any sign of it since. The swamp just has not "felt right" since the mushroom creatures appeared. (The fish have disappeared because they are falling prey to the damaged ecological balance of the swamp.)
- The campestris are slightly lethargic in the daylight, and they spend 2-3 hours every day standing immobile in the mucky goo near the water channels. (The campestris do have an inactive cycle in bright sunlight. They stand in the swamp goo when they are feeding).

If PCs ask questions about Katan's background or ask him why he thought they were assassins, he responds reluctantly and evasively. For example, if the PCs ask him why he lives out here all alone in the swamp, he tells them "I'm on vacation. Just had to get away from all that pressure for a bit." If the PCs manage to tease the story about the stock market killing out of him, he insists that he is "just out here in the swamp for a little while, until the heat dies down a bit."

Once the PCs have had time to question Katan about the campestris, the swamp, his past, and other miscellaneous subjects, move on to the next section.

The Coming of the Mosquitoes

This encounter occurs in the twilight hours of the evening, just as the sun is setting over the Glitchegumee Swamp. When you are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Katan has just finished telling you a little bit about his past and his life in the swamp, when at least a dozen of the brown-and-white spotted mushroom creatures burst out of the bushes and dart straight toward him, squealing as they come. The creatures crowd around Katan's legs and jump up and down in his lap, spreading little clods of dirt and silt everywhere while chirping shrilly the whole time. Katan spends a few frantic moments trying to push the mushrooms off his lap before he finally gives up in resignation. "All right, all right already. I'll light up a cigar. Just get off me for a minute!"

Once Katan reaches for the pouch where he keeps his cigars, the mushrooms become noticeably quieter. After a few moments of fumbling, Katan lights a home-rolled stogie and starts puffing away. The mushrooms watch Katan's every movement with rapt attention. You move away slightly, because the drifting cigar smoke smells incredibly bad. The merest whiff of the smoke leaves you feeling faint and nauseated. After about 10 minutes of olfactory torture, the mushrooms amble away into the bushes and concealing grasses of the swamp, whistling a catchy, almost understandable tune

that sounds remarkably like a dwarven work-chant (the DM should whistle "Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work we go").

Make a hear-noise check for each PC (for nonrogues, see the *DMG*, page 129). If the check is successful, the PC hears a faint buzzing sound, like a swarm of bees in the distance. If the PC makes the roll by 10% or more, he can tell that the noise is coming from deeper in the swamp.

The campestris crowded around Katan and forced him to light a cigar because one of their lookouts detected a swarm of giant mosquitoes headed in the direction of Katan's cottage. If Katan continues to smoke the cigar, the mosquitoes will stay away from his dwelling for at least 24 hours.

If any of the PCs heard the buzzing noise (the mosquitoes), the party may decide to ask Katan to put out the cigar, just to see what will happen. If Katan extinguishes the cigar before it is finished, the mosquitoes swoop in and attack everyone near the cottage (see "Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters" for statistics on the mosquito swarm). The PCs can hide underwater, but they may be attacked by leeches or other pests.

Katan will happily give the PCs up to five of his cigars, if asked. Any PC who attempts to smoke one of Katan's foul cigars must make a Constitution check every round or be stricken by a fit of coughing, gagging, and retching. This fit lasts for 20 rounds minus the character's Constitution score, and the PC has a −2 adjustment to Strength and a penalty of −2 to attack rolls during this time. Katan has smoked the cigars for so long that he has developed an immunity to their debilitating effects. If a PC manages to smoke one of the cigars for five rounds continuously (which finishes the cigar), the smoke will repel all giant mosquitoes in the area for a period of 24 hours. The mosquitoes will not come closer than 100′ from the PC during this time. PCs who think of using the cigars as mosquito-repellant should be given a 100-XP bonus.

The Crocodile Cruise

After the encounter (or nonencounter) with the mosquitoes, things remain quiet around Katan's cottage until the morning. This next encounter takes place about an hour after dawn the next day, right about the time that the PCs are getting ready to leave Katan's cottage to continue their journey. To start the encounter, read or paraphrase the following to the players. Ask them to be patient before you start. It will take you several minutes to describe the following scene, although the actual events take place in a matter of seconds.

The foggy morning mists are just beginning to lift, and already Katan is loading up his boat to go fishing, carefully placing supplies and equipment in the low-slung craft. Suddenly, a small herd of the ever-present mushroom creatures rushes out of the bushes and descends upon Katan. The creatures squeal at the top of their lungs (if they *have* lungs) and crowd around Katan's legs. Some of them butt into him quite forcefully. The old man curses and swears, but the mushrooms slowly drive him away from the boat. Katan trips over a loose board in the dock and falls down with a grunt.

Just as Katan trips, a gigantic crocodile erupts from the slow-moving swamp water and smashes down on the dock, right where Katan would have been standing if he had been getting into the boat!

With squeals of terror, the mushrooms flee from the rampaging reptile. The crocodile thrashes around, lunging for Katan, who rolls out of the way with a sprightliness born of terror. The crocodile snaps up one of the mushrooms instead. The mushroom emits an abruptly cut-off squeal and ejects a cloud of yellow spores as it is crushed in the crocodile's massive jaws. With one final pathetic whimper, the torn and tattered mushroom disappears down the crocodile's terrible, tooth-filled maw.

The crocodile lunges across the severely damaged dock toward Katan (who madly scrambles to get away), but the reptile seems to be moving very slowly for some reason.

Giant crocodile: INT animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/2-20; SD −2 penalty to opponent's surprise roll; SZ H (27' long); ML 11; XP 975; MC2.

The giant crocodile's hide can be sold for 80 gp per square yard, if properly cured. There are 13 square yards of hide on the crocodile.

This crocodile is desperate for food, otherwise it never would have come so close to the edge of the swamp. The mosquitoes are killing off the wildlife in the swamp, including the crocodile's normal prey, at an alarming rate. If the players ask, the PCs can easily see that the crocodile is abnormally thin. The croc's slowness is due to the spores released by the dying campestri, which act as a *slow* spell (see page 70).

If the PCs are all of 1st level, it will be difficult for them to handle the giant crocodile. If the DM wants to give them a surreptitious helping hand, Katan comes forward to help them out. The old codger is not the best man in a fight, but he is better than nothing.

If the DM wants a more amusing option, the crocodile gets indigestion from eating the campestri, giving it −2 on all attack rolls, in addition to the effects of the *slow* spores. In this case, two rounds after it swallows the campestri, the crocodile slows down even more, rolls its eyes wildly, burps, and starts bellowing in extreme pain (it takes 1-3 hp damage per round for five rounds). It seems that the campestris might be more "inedible" than "edible." If the PCs are still taking a beating and the DM wants to bail them out, the crocodile decides that it has had enough (fails a morale check) and slithers off into the swamp in the hopes of finding easier prey elsewhere.

Katan's Swamp Lore

Eventually, the PCs should get the idea that Something is Desperately Wrong in the swamp. They may decide to explore the swamp in order to discover what is wrong. Or they may decide to leave Old Man Katan and the singing mushrooms behind and get as far away from the swamp as possible.

If the PCs do decide to stay and explore, they will probably want to question Katan about the swamp. Because of his near-lifetime in the region, Katan knows several interesting bits of lore about the Glitchegumee. Again, do not read this information to the players as a dry monologue. Role-play through the exchange of information, allowing Katan's rolling, swamp-dweller accent to shine through. Katan is sure to volunteer the information in paragraphs 1 and 2, but the PCs will have to ask appropriate questions to dig the rest of this information out of the old coot.

1. Dangers of the swamp include quicksand, bog-gas, and a will o'wisp that has caught many an unwary traveler. Several years ago, the Volkrad thieves' guild sent out several assassins to do away with Katan once and for all. Katan managed to escape execution by leading the assassins into the swamp at night, where the will o'wisp destroyed them. He felt awful about leading the unsuspecting assassins to that horrible fate, but it was either their life or his.

2. All of the old timers who live in and around the Glitchegumee, including Katan, have glimpsed a strange, shadowy, hulking creature lurking in the deep shadows of the swamp. No one knows what this creature really is. On the few occasions when Katan spotted the Bog Monster, he got away from the area as fast as his boat would carry him. Over the years, a few travelers have disappeared (on nights when the will o'wisp was not out!), and occasionally one of the old timers disappears. In such cases, the remaining swamp dwellers say that "the Bog Monster got him."

3. The name "Glitchegumee" is a corruption of the Old Elvish phrase "Gli-tara-chemoghai-urumee," which (loosely translated) means "a soggy place where only stupid people would live because the air reeks almost as badly as an unwashed dwarf." Katan knows the elven name for the swamp, but he does not know what the name means. A wicked DM who wished to sow dissension amongst the ranks could pass the player of an elven PC a note saying what the name means . . .

4. Katan is aware that a huge battle between men and orcs took place in the swamp about two centuries ago (see the information presented in "For the Dungeon Master"). Katan has recovered several artifacts of the battle: some coins, a corroded weapon or two, and a few pieces of severely damaged armor.

5. Katan is well aware of the swamp's shifting, mysterious behavior, as discussed in the sidebar "Exploring the Glitchegumee Swamp."

Borrowing the Swamp Boat

The PCs may want to borrow Katan's boat to explore the swamp. When they ask him for this favor, Katan squirms and looks a little uncomfortable, perhaps even embarrassed. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> "Well, I'd be glad to let you have the use of my boat, but maybe that ain't such a good idea. I'm not sure it'll behave for you. I raised that boat up from a baby punt, and it always gets a little cantankerous when someone else tries to use it. Me and that old floater, we've been all over the swamp together."

Katan looks uncomfortable and embarrassed as he says this because he knows that it sounds like he has gone around the bend. By this time, the PC should be thinking that perhaps living out here in the swamp all alone for so long has affected Katan's grip on reality. The DM should role-play Katan in this section in such a way as to emphasize this impression.

Everything that Katan says about the boat is true, as he will fiercely insist if the PCs challenge him. The boat really has grown since he first built it; the old man does not know how or why, and he tries very hard not to think about it. The boat really is difficult for anyone but Katan to handle. When he uses the boat, he barely has to touch the oars to get it to move where he wants.

The few other people who have borrowed the boat over the years have remarked that the craft is heavy, difficult to handle, and leaks a lot. One fellow even swore up and down that the boat dumped him out into the water, but Katan thinks that was just because he was a really awful boatman.

When Katan first moved to the swamp, years ago, he fashioned himself a crude fishing punt out of the local materials. One night, a baby swamp-mimic (a rare, swamp-dwelling cousin of the subterranean mimic described in the *Monstrous Compendium*) swam by Katan's dock and decided to imitate the boat, to see what it could catch. It sank the real boat beneath the dock.

The next day, Katan went out in the mimic/boat to go fishing. Just as the mimic was about to launch a surprise attack and devour Katan, the man threw a fish down into the bottom of the boat, and the mimic knew that it had it

made. It thought to itself, "Give up one big meal now and get fed for as long as this human continues to fish."

The mimic has been serving as Katan's boat ever since, taking the occasional fish as payment for its services. It stays in boat shape at all times, because it knows that if Katan spotted it shifting forms, the old man would not trust it any longer. The swamp-mimic has grown very attached to Katan over the years.

Once he has warned the PCs about the boat's mysterious nature, Katan will allow the PCs to use the boat to explore the swamp, if they still want to. Katan makes the PCs promise to be careful with the boat and not to hurt it. He also sternly warns the boat (with a solid whack on the prow), "Don't you act up on these fellers, now. Be good, and do what these fellers tell you." The swamp-boat mimic will obey this order unless severely provoked by the PCs (such as if the PCs attack it). In this case, the boat dumps the PCs into the swamp and swims back to Katan's dock.

When the PCs are getting into the boat, the DM can play with the player's minds a little by stating that the boat will hold only two people and a few bits of gear. Once the PCs have decided who gets into the boat and who must wade, the DM can tell them, "The boat must be bigger than you thought. It looks as if you might be able to squeeze in three people and some gear." This should make the players wonder. The mimic expanded a little, once it knew how much it had to carry, but it cannot make itself any larger. Three people is the limit of the mimic's carrying capacity.

Swamp boat mimic: INT average; AL N; AC 7; MV 3, swim 6; HD 8; hp 54; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA −4 penalty to victim's surprise rolls; glue holds victims fast (victim must successfully roll to open doors to break free); SD camouflage; immune to acid and attacks by molds, green slime, and puddings; SZ L; ML 15; MC2.

Help from the Campestris

The PCs may wish to take one of the campestris along with them when they set out to explore the swamp. The campestris cannot be forced to go along with the PCs, but they can be persuaded. If the PCs grab a campestri and take it along by force, the mushroom creature will do its best to escape. It will certainly

Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters

No encounters occur while the PCs are at Katan's cottage. When the PCs go off to explore the swamp, the DM should select 2-3 encounters from this list, in addition to at least one encounter with a mosquito swarm. The encounters are listed roughly in order of increasing difficulty, to make it easier to select encounters appropriate to the PCs. The encounters should be spaced over several days of game time. Roll 1d12 to determine the hour of the encounter.

Water moccasin: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA save vs. poison at −2 or take 3-12 hp damage (1-4 hp per round for three rounds) beginning 2-12 rounds after being bitten; SZ S (45" long); ML 8; XP 175; MC1 (Snake, poisonous, normal).

The water moccasin is olive-brown with dark crossbars. Because of this snake's remarkable resemblance to several nonpoisonous varieties, anyone who wishes to identify it must make an animal lore nonweapon proficiency check at −3 or misidentify the snake as nonpoisonous.

Quicksand: The PCs stumble across a patch of quicksand. Quicksand affects only PCs who are on foot in the swamp; if the PCs are poling along in boats, they cannot be sucked under by quicksand. During this encounter, the PC in the lead must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or fall into the quicksand. If the lead PC falls in, the next PC in line must also save vs. paralyzation or fall in, and so on down the line. Rescuers (who presumably are either on solid ground or in the swamp-boat) can haul victims out of the quicksand on a successful open-doors roll. The rescuers can extend their reach with a rope, vine, branch, pole, or similar object.

If no help is available, victims must make a Wisdom check or sink into the quicksand and die in five rounds. A moderately encumbered (or heavier) PC will sink and die in three rounds. If the Wisdom check succeeds, the PC saves himself by refusing to panic, and grabbing a bush, vine, branch, etc., to pull himself out of the quicksand.

Leeches, giant (2-4): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 2; hp 9, 8, 4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2 per round; SA drain blood, 5% per wound of causing disease; SZ S; ML 7; XP 120; MC2.

Giant leeches can only attack creatures wading through the swamp; boaters are not subject to attacks. A leech drains blood until it has drained 18 hp, then drops off its victim. Applying a torch to the leech makes the creature drop off, but the victim must save vs. spells for half damage or take 1-6 hp damage. Weapons damage the leeches, but their jaws keep sucking and continue to do damage even when the leech is dead.

Bog gas: The rotting vegetation of the Glitchegumee Swamp gives off a steady supply of rank, fetid, and highly explosive gas. This bog gas collects in low-lying areas of the swamp, where it poses a hazard to anyone who enters the swamp.

If this encounter occurs, roll for each PC to see if he detects a smell (a PC's chance to detect odors is equal to his chance to detect secret doors). If the check succeeds, the PC detects a faint odor of rotten eggs.

If the PCs are carrying lit torches, naked flames, or any exposed metal capable of striking a spark, make a saving throw vs. spells for each PC every round. Continue doing this as long as the PCs are within 100 yards of the place where the encounter was indicated. If the saving throw fails, a spark or flame sets off a 4d6-hp fireball that affects everyone within a 40' radius (save vs. spells for half damage). Don't forget to make saving throws vs. normal fire for any exposed items the PCs are carrying.

Once an area of the swamp has been ignited, it is safe until the bog gas accumulates again in 1-3 hours.

Spiders, large (2-20): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison for 15 hp damage (save at +2 for no damage); anyone caught in the spiders' webs takes 19 rounds minus the victim's Strength score to free itself; creatures caught in the webs lose +4 from their AC in addition to losing all Dexterity bonuses to AC; SZ S (2' diameter); ML 7; XP 175; MC1.

The spider's treasure consists of 18 cp, 20 sp, 6 gp, a pair of bronze wine cups (5 gp), a steel axe, four bamboo fishing poles, an elven long bow (200 gp), and various small pieces of jewelry (rings, brooches, etc.) worth a total of 65 gp. One of the spiders has a giant mosquito cocooned in silk in a corner of its web. The spider is saving it for a snack later on.

Mosquitoes, giant (20 + 4d6 per swarm): INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 1, fly 18 (A); HD ½; hp 1-4 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1 per 10 mosquitoes; Dmg see below; SA attacks as 5-HD monster, see below; SZ T (6"-8" wingspan); ML 18; XP 35; new monster.

Giant mosquitoes, like their smaller cousins, gather into swarms to travel and attack. The buzzing of mosquito wings becomes clearly audible as a low-pitched humming noise when the mosquitoes are within 50 yards. A swarm typically takes the shape of a roughly spherical ball with a diameter of about 40'. Giant mosquitoes are therefore very vulnerable to area-affect spells such as *fireball.*

All creatures within range of the swarm (40' diameter circle) can be attacked by the mosquitoes. The swarm does 1-6 hp damage (using blood drain) to each creature that it successfully attacks. The swarm ceases to attack once it has drained 2 hp worth of blood for each mosquito in the swarm. For example, a swarm consisting of 35 mosquitoes will drain 70 hp worth of blood before it ceases to attack. The swarm will be sated for 1d8 + 4 hours after an attack. There is a 5% chance per wound of contracting a serious disease from the mosquitoes.

For game purposes, there are an unlimited number of giant mosquito swarms in the Glitchegumee Swamp, so this encounter can be used repeatedly. Most such encounters should occur in the hours just before and after sunset.

Yellow musk creeper: INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 0; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2-12; Dmg special; SA gas; SD see below; SZ L (20' square); ML 20; XP 650; MC2.

The creeper appears as a light-green vine with 1-4 dark-green buds and 2-12 orchid-type flowers. It lies dormant until a victim approaches within 10', at which time it turns a bud toward the victim and expels a puff of pollen. If the creeper's attack roll is successful, the victim must make a saving throw vs. spells or be entranced and walk into the reach of the plant. The round after the victim walks into the plant, dozens of roots burrow into the victim's brain, draining 1-4 points of Intelligence every round. If the victim's Intelligence is reduced to 1 or 2, he becomes a yellow musk zombie under the control of the creeper. If Intelligence is reduced to 0 or less, the victim dies instantly.

In combat, damage to the creeper is recorded only if the damage is done to the bulbous root just under the surface of the soil. The plant eventually regrows any lost vines or flowers.

This creeper has a total of 400 gp worth of treasure, buried next to its root. Its presence also guards a grove of rare medicinal herbs. The herb patch can be harvested once per year. Each harvest provides 100 gp worth of herbs.

Yellow musk zombies (1-2 per flower): INT non; AL N; AC 10; MV 6; HD 2 (special); hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (weapon); SD see below; SZ M (4'-7' tall); ML 20; XP 120; MC2.

The yellow musk creeper and the yellow musk zombies are not affected by *charm, hold, sleep,* illusions, or other mind-affecting spells. Yellow musk zombies cannot be turned by priests, since they are not truly undead.

Sundew, giant: INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 8; hp 36; THAC0 12; #AT 6 per target; Dmg 1-3; SA suffocating; SD missiles and fire-based attacks inflict half damage; SZ M (3'-4' high); ML 11; XP 2,000; MC2 (Plant, carnivorous).

A partially digested giant mosquito is stuck to the outside of the giant sundew. PCs must make a successful tracking or animal lore nonweapon proficiency check to identify the soggy mess as a mosquito.

Will o'wisp: INT 15; AL CE; AC −8; MV fly 18 (A); HD 9; hp 47; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA/SD see below; SZ S; ML 17; XP 4,000; MC1 (variant).

The will o'wisp can blank out and render itself *invisible* for 2-8 rounds. It is immune to all spells except *protection from evil, magic missile,* and *maze.* Anyone who watches this will o'wisp for two or more rounds must save vs. spells or be subject to a *suggestion* to follow the 'wisp (this power represents a slight deviation from the description in the MC). If the PCs succumb to the *suggestion* and follow the 'wisp, roll 1d6 each turn for each PC. A roll of 1 indicates that the PCs have stumbled into a patch of quicksand.

This encounter occurs only at night. If this encounter is indicated during daylight, delay the encounter until it is night.

The 'wisp is a terrible threat and probably beyond the capabilities of low-level PCs to deal with. However, the will o'wisp could be the focus of a future adventure.

not cooperate if held against its will.

If a PC bard (or a PC who passes a singing nonweapon proficiency check) croons to the campestris for at least one turn before the PCs set out into the swamp, 1-3 campestris will follow the PCs as they leave. These campestris stay with the PCs for as long as the PCs are in the swamp.

Campestri tag-alongs can provide a warning if the mosquitoes are about to attack. Two rounds before any encounters with the giant mosquitoes, the campestris start squealing and jumping up and down. This should give the PCs time to prepare some sort of defense.

A Creature in the Bushes

Just before the PCs set out into the great Glitchegumee Swamp, Katan comes forth with one final request. He asks the PCs:

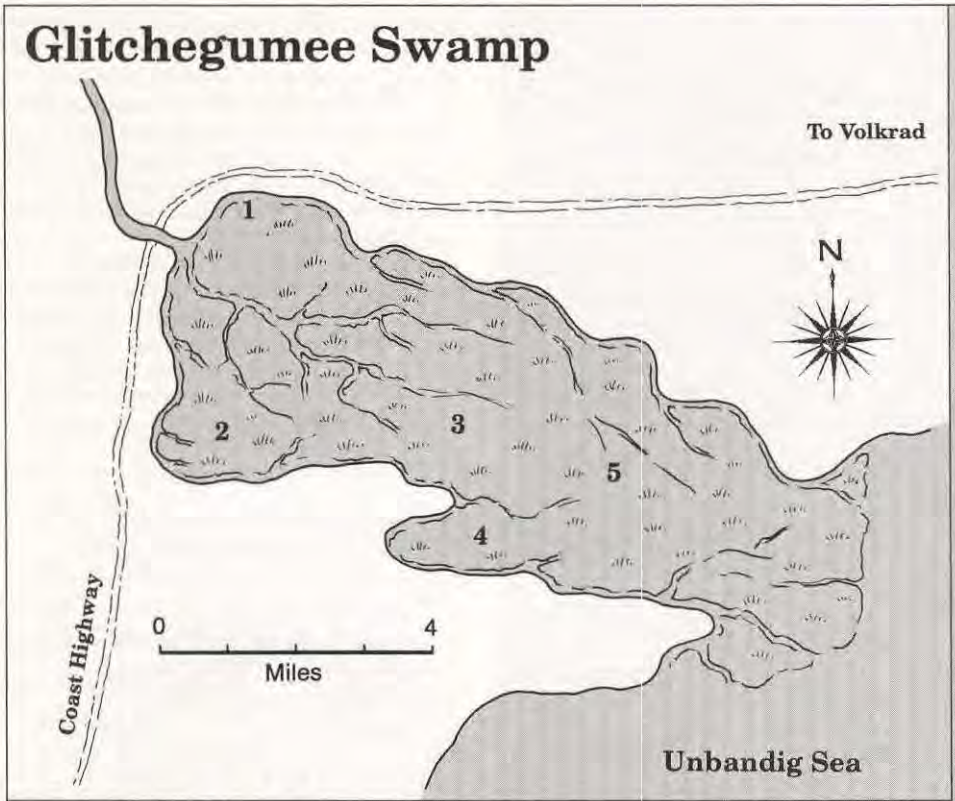
> "Oh, er . . . by the way. As long as you're going exploring, remember how I said my cat disappeared a week ago? Well, if you could have a look around for Hlaupa while you're out there, I sure would appreciate it."

While the PCs are looking for Hlaupa, they may wander around the swamp calling out "Here kitty, kitty. Here Hlaupa!" Award a 50-XP bonus for good role-playing to each PC whose player actually calls out.

Every good horror movie has a scene where a cat leaps into somebody's face, scares the heck out of everyone, and then provides some comic relief. And such is the case in this adventure. Katan's cat, Hlaupa, is destined to give the PCs quite a fright before they finally catch up with the irascible feline.

Hlaupa has been wandering around the swamp hunting and dodging mosquitoes for the last few days. A few hours after the PCs enter the swamp, Hlaupa (who is not lost, by the way) finds the PCs. Out of natural feline curiosity, Hlaupa follows the adventurers to see where they go—for several days if necessary. The impact of the search for Hlaupa can be heightened by careful staging.

As noted earlier, the Glitchegumee Swamp is eerily devoid of most animal life. This fact should make the PCs a little nervous when they first start to explore the swamp. Conduct at least one random encounter before the PCs have



Exploring the Glitchegumee Swamp

The Glitchegumee is a coastal saltwater swamp. It is about five miles wide and stretches more than 15 miles inland. Most of its bywaters are stagnant or nearly so, although the main channels do have sluggish tides. Narrow, winding channels criss-cross the swamp. The channel water is just 2'-3' deep, but several feet of sticky mud and half-rotted muck line the bottom of the channels. Floating hummocks of vegetation drift around at random in the swamp, changing the configuration of the channels from moment to moment. The random drift of the hummocks makes finding a path through the swamp a difficult task.

It is possible to move through the swamp on foot, by sticking to the few bits of dry land and leaping from hummock to hummock. However, anyone on foot in the swamp will eventually have to wade in order to progress. Wading through the channels is not dangerous in itself, but it will leave the wader tired, wet, and very smelly.

For those unfamiliar with the swamp, there is a base 60% chance per day of becoming hopelessly lost. If the PCs ask Katan for help in finding their way, the old man tells them about several swamp landmarks, such as the Haunted Tree (see area 3). Knowing about these landmarks reduces the chance of becoming lost by 20%. Award a bonus of 200 XP to any PC who thinks to ask about landmarks. If there are any rangers in the PC group, the chance of becoming lost is further reduced by 2% per level of each ranger. Lastly, the chance of becoming lost is reduced by 10% if any of the PCs have the wilderness survival (swamp) nonweapon proficiency.

If the PCs get lost, the dangers of the swamp will, in all likelihood, eventually destroy them. The DM can take pity on the PCs and have Hlaupa (Katan's cat) guide them back to Katan's cottage. Or, the DM could rule that the swamp-boat mimic (see "Borrowing the Swamp Boat") gets tired of paddling aimlessly around the swamp and heads for home. Either rescue can occur 1-3 days after the PCs become lost.

A swamp is normally a very noisy place, filled with birdsong, the hum of insects, and the eerie calls of swamp wildlife. However, anyone who ventures into the Glitchegumee quickly notices that this swamp is a lot quieter than one would normally expect. There are hardly any bird or animal noises. There are lots of insect noises, but even they sound subdued. As long as the mosquitoes reign in the swamp, it will be difficult to find any land-dwelling creature larger than a mouse.

There is no timetable for rolling random encounters in the swamp. See "Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters" for guidelines in selecting appropriate swamp encounters.

1. Old Man Katan's Cottage. Katan's cottage is a small, sturdy structure fashioned of whitewashed brick. It took Katan many years to build the cottage, and he is very proud of it. The cottage sits on one of the few solid pieces of land in the swamp, and 3'-high stone pilings serve as its foundation. Because of its elevation, the cabin is fairly dry, unlike most places in the swamp.

The cottage is located about 500 yards off the Coast Highway, well hidden among the drooping, moss-draped trees. The building is fitted with many windows oriented to catch the fitful breezes. All of the windows are equipped with thick wooden shutters that keep out monsoonlike rains and the occasional swamp creature.

The porch is fashioned of rough-planed wooden planks that sit about 3' off the ground. Katan takes good care of the sloping porch roof, so it leaks only a little. A light wooden rail runs around the edge of the porch, at a height admirably suited for propping up one's feet while relaxing in a comfortable chair. On those few evenings when the insects are bearable, Katan sits out on the porch and relaxes in the rocking chair that he built with his own hands (as he built all of his other furniture). Usually, Old Man Katan smokes his cigars at this time.

The cabin also includes a combination kitchen and living room, a larder, and a bedroom. Over the years, Katan has filled the cottage with items important to his lonely life in the isolated swamp. Items of interest include books, scrolls, diaries, scribblings, bits of paper, toys for his cat, strange and exotic spices and foodstuffs gleaned from the swamp, a collection of strange swamp insects, a butterfly collection, dried flowers of unknown varieties, and a sheaf of notes that lists the best places to fish in the swamp, and what types of fish are caught in each place. A drawer in his

desk also holds 20 sheets of blank paper, 10 goose-quill pens, two vials of writing ink, blotting sand, a gold pen (50 gp), and 2 pp. A promissory note entitling the bearer to withdraw 1,000 gp from a merchant bank with its headquarters in Volkrad is sewn into the cover of one of Katan's books.

Years ago, Katan enlisted the aid of some of his fellow swamp-dwellers to help him drive in the heavy logs that support his dock. The dock is now moss-draped and sagging but still quite sturdy, as Katan carefully maintains the boards that form its surface. The dock is 15′ long and 3′ wide. Katan's swamp-boat is usually tied up on the right side of the dock.

Old Man Katan also has a smokehouse for drying fish and other meat. From time to time, the smokehouse serves double duty as a curing shed for Katan's wild swamp tobacco. A loose floorboard in the shed conceals the remnants of Katan's earlier fortune. Removing the floorboard reveals a small cavity containing a wooden chest. A wax seal renders the chest waterproof. The chest contains 1,200 gp in coins, bank notes, and small, portable valuables.

2. The Will o'Wisp's Bog. The will o'wisp's lair is well hidden in the dank and putrid backwaters of the swamp. The 'wisp keeps its treasure at the bottom of an especially deep quicksand bog. There are no visible signs that this area of the swamp is anything other than just another patch of quicksand. Because of this, the PCs cannot find the 'wisp's lair unless they follow the 'wisp to it, or somehow force the 'wisp to lead them to it. See the "Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters" sidebar for the will o'wisp's statistics.

The will o'wisp has an enormous amount of treasure, gleaned from its victims of the past many years. The total value of the will o'wisp's treasure is about 10,000 gp. This treasure trove includes several items that belonged to the assassins whom Katan led to their doom at the "hands" of the 'wisp, such as a *crossbow of speed,* a black diamond pendant (1,000 gp), a black onyx and gold bracelet (200 gp), and three gold necklaces (100 gp each) that are symbols of Volkrad's assassins' guild. Other items in the treasure trove include a gilded helm (120 gp) and eight silver mirrors (10 gp each). The composition of the rest of the treasure is left to the DM.

3. The Haunted Tree. The Haunted Tree is simply a large, craggy, hollow gray tree with only a few strips of scabby bark left on its trunk. It stands about 40′ high. Many of its long, spindly, dead branches are broken off at the ends. Its lower limbs are draped with moss and vines. The tree's overall appearance is quite spooky, and the dismal reputation of the area is further enhanced by the fact that this part of the swamp seems to be permanently shrouded in a thin, wispy fog. Old-timers in the swamp swear that if you linger too long near the Haunted Tree, you can hear the moans of the dead and the clacking of skeletal bones.

These moaning noises may be nothing more than the wind whistling through holes in the hollow trunk. The dead limbs of the tree clack together when the wind blows, making a sound quite like that of bones clicking together. Or perhaps the tree really is haunted. It's up to the DM to decide.

The Haunted Tree is easily recognizable and is one of the main landmarks used by the locals when they navigate through the swamp. If the PCs ask Katan for landmarks, he will tell them where the tree stands in relation to his cottage, which will make it easier for them find their way around the swamp (and less likely that the PCs will become hopelessly lost). Katan warns the PCs that the tree is haunted and advises them not to get too close.

4. Giant Mosquito Fens. The PCs should not be allowed to find the bogs where the mosquitoes are breeding without help from the Bog Monster. The breeding bogs are just like any of the hundreds of other pools of stagnant water that dot the swamp.

Once the PCs find the breeding bogs, there are several ways to destroy the threat of the giant mosquitoes forever. Possible methods include draining away the water, sifting out all the mosquito larvae and destroying them, or poisoning the bogs. The bogs are all at least 50′ in diameter and about 6″ deep, so options like draining away the water might take several days to accomplish.

Here's an example of how to judge the PCs efforts: Suppose that the PCs decide to drain the bogs. This solution requires that one of the PCs have the engineering nonweapon proficiency. That PC will supply the knowledge to allow the group to construct appropriate ditches, culverts, drain points, etc. Roll 1d6 to determine the number of days taken up by the effort. At the end of this time, make an engineering nonweapon proficiency check. If the check succeeds, the PCs successfully destroy all the mosquito larvae. If the check fails, a few larvae survive, and the mosquitoes will gradually rebuild their numbers. They will become a threat again in about 12 months.

If the PCs carefully search the giant mosquito breeding bogs, they have a 1-in-20 chance per man-hour of searching to find an item from the following list: the skeleton of a large swamp creature; a gilded weapon hilt worth 25 gp; a gold trumpet mouthpiece worth 5 gp; a small, corroded metal hip flask that would still be watertight except for one small hole.

5. Lair of the Bog Monster. The Bog Monster makes its lair in an abnormally large (50′ wide, 100′ long) pool of slowly flowing water. The pool varies from 5′-8′ deep, its bottom coated with several feet of mud and muck. The Bog Monster spends much of its time floating around in this pool, looking just like another floating hummock of vegetation. Because there is nothing to distinguish this pool from any of the thousands of other pools in the swamp, the PCs cannot find it unless they follow the Bog Monster.

For years, the Bog Monster has collected "shiny bits" from the bodies of the warriors killed in the long-ago battle between orcs and men. It also has items scavenged from its victims. The Bog Monster keeps these items buried just beneath the surface of the mud at the bottom of its pool. The items consist of things like gilded weapons, decorated pieces of armor, a few coins, and various bright and shiny objects. The total value of all of the items is about 1,500 gp, and the exact composition of the treasure is left to the DM. The muck at the bottom of the pool also conceals the bones of a dozen humanoid creatures, victims of the Bog Monster.

See "The Bog Monster of Glitchegumee Swamp" for complete statistics.

their first run-in with Hlaupa, just to throw the players off a bit. The deadly nature of the encounter will make the PCs paranoid and afraid of the next encounter. When you are ready for the PCs to encounter the cat, randomly roll a few dice (to mislead the players) and then read or paraphrase the following paragraph.

> A soft rustling noise in the bushes, about 10′ to your right and slightly behind you, attracts your attention. As you turn to look, a spine-tingling screech vibrates through the air, emanating from whatever creature is hiding in the shrubbery. You wince in pain and cover your ears, but the noise abruptly ceases, and you realize that the creature has used your moment of distraction to bound away into the concealing depths of the swamp.

From now on, Hlaupa hounds the PCs and harasses them constantly. Mention a "rustling in the bushes" at every opportunity: when the PCs are making or breaking camp, just before or after a random encounter, etc. Rephrase the above paragraph with each encounter. The DM should do everything in his power to convince the players that some horrible swamp creature is stalking the party. An especially effective method for inducing player paranoia is to immediately conduct a random encounter after Hlaupa screams. The idea is to get the PCs to cast spells, fire missiles, and otherwise go to extraordinary lengths to try to kill or capture "the creature in the bushes."

The PCs should eventually realize that maybe the creature in the bushes is Katan's cat. If the PCs continually make friendly noises to the creature, calling out "Here kitty" each time Hlaupa rustles or screams, the cat will play along for 1d4 + 1 more encounters, then waltz right into the PCs' camp, muddy tail held high. He demands to be fed and will accompany the PCs from this point on (until they return to Katan's cottage). If the PCs recover Hlaupa in this fashion, award a bonus of 300 XP, to be split among all the PCs. If the PCs do not make friendly overtures to the "creature in the bushes" (or continue to shoot at it), Hlaupa will never come into their camp.

Remember that Hlaupa is abnormally intelligent, for a cat, and he has seen the mosquitoes. He is probably a little smarter than the individual campestris. If the PCs have access to a *speak with animals* spell, they may be able to get some useful information out of Hlaupa. The cat knows that the swamp is devoid of life because the mosquitoes are killing everything. He also knows that the mosquitoes are extremely large, and that the Bog Monster is almost always nearby when the mosquitoes are hunting.

Hlaupa, cat: INT low; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1; SA scream, claw rake; SD see below; SZ S (2′ long, not counting his 1′ tail); ML 10; MC11 (variant).

Hlaupa is at least half bobcat and still mostly wild. The wily cat saves as an 8th-level character, using the best saving throw in each category. The cat takes no damage from falling. Hlaupa is the proverbial cat with nine lives, although he has used up a few of them in his time. Attacks directed at Hlaupa inexplicably miss; spells misfire (or he escapes with slight singe marks); and anyone who attempts to grab him trips over something and lands face-first in the mud. These events are a reflection of the cat's excellent saving throws. Successful attacks aimed at Hlaupa that would result in his death simply use up one or more of his nine lives (exactly how many of his lives are left is an issue best left to the DM).

The Bog Monster of the Glitchegumee Swamp

The encounter with the Bog Monster of Glitchegumee Swamp occurs at a time to be determined by the DM. The DM may wish to run two or three random encounters (see "Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters" sidebar), spaced over a couple of days of game time, before the PCs encounter the Bog Monster on the fourth or fifth day of exploring the swamp. This procedure works best, especially for low-level parties. Otherwise, roll 1d6 for each day spent exploring the swamp. A result of 1 indicates that an encounter with the Bog Monster takes place during that day. Roll 1d12 to determine during what hour of the day the encounter occurs.

An encounter with the Bog Monster begins with an attack by a large cloud of giant mosquitoes (for statistics on the mosquito swarm, see "Glitchegumee Swamp Encounters"). Use the maximum possible swarm size (44 mosquitoes). During the combat between the PCs and the mosquitoes, each PC has a chance (10% plus the PC's level) each round to notice a shadowy, hulking figure lurking in the bushes 3d6 + 10 yards away. This menacing figure is the Bog Monster of the Glitchegumee Swamp. The DM should do his best to paint an aura of menace and power over this brooding figure.

The Bog Monster is controlling the mosquitoes' attack on the PCs. However, as it watches the PCs do battle, the Bog Monster is very confused. It still wants to play with its "toys" (the mosquitoes), but it also knows that something is wrong with the swamp. It wonders if the humanoids would be able to help it figure out what is wrong.

However, in the Bog Monster's experience, most humanoids panic and become violent if it gets too near them. Its past experience has taught the Bog Monster that it is safest to hang back and watch other creatures from a distance. The sight of the Bog Monster staring out from the bushes can be a bit unnerving, which is the reason why Old Man Katan never remained in the area long enough to discover that the Bog Monster is not necessarily hostile.

The Bog Monster will respond to the PCs in exactly the same fashion as they treat it. If the PCs attack the Bog Monster, it fights back, using all of its formidable abilities. It is basically a child, and children can have terrible, unreasoning tempers. If the PCs question the Bog Monster, it will talk with them. If they appeal to the Bog Monster for help, it will call off the mosquitoes.

Bog Monster (variant shambling mound): INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6, swim 12; HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-12; SA suffocation; SD see below; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 17; XP 3,000; MC2.

If a victim is hit by both of the Bog Monster's arms in the same round, the victim becomes entangled in leaves and vines and suffocates in 2-8 rounds, unless the Bog Monster is killed or the victim breaks free (on a successful bend bars/lift gates roll). The Bog Monster takes half damage from edged and pointed weapons, no damage from crushing weapons. It is immune to fire attacks, and cold does half damage if the saving throw fails, none if the saving throw succeeds. The Bog Monster can hide in bogs and leap out at its victims, with a −3 penalty to the

victim's surprise roll. The Bog Monster is also an excellent swimmer. It heals fully in 12 hours.

Unlike a normal shambling mound, the Bog Monster is a child of the Glitchegumee Swamp itself. The Bog Monster is destined to become the guardian of the swamp, a role into which it will gradually mature. In order to increase its effectiveness as a guardian, the Bog Monster has been granted the following spell-like abilities, usable at will once per day: *charm mammal, summon insects, entangle, plant growth, speak with plants, hold plant.*

The Bog Monster's response to the PCs is purposely vague. The DM should try to empathize with its confused, bewildered, lonely (but not necessarily unfriendly) state of mind and roleplay the Bog Monster's actions in response to the PCs' actions. The PCs should get the impression that they are dealing with a rather large four-year-old child.

If the PCs open discussions with the Bog Monster, the huge creature will be forthright about explaining its part in recent events. It is desperate to get the swamp back to normal. One way for the PCs to convince the Bog Monster to help them exterminate the mosquitoes is to patiently explain to it that if it uses the mosquitoes to drive out the creatures that it does not like, it will also damage the creatures that it does like, such as the many birds, lizards, campestris, and other pretty creatures.

The Bog Monster can summon and destroy all of the adult mosquitoes, once it has been convinced that they are bad for the Glitchegumee. The Bog Monster also knows where the giant mosquitoes breed. If the PCs ask, it will lead the PCs to the various bogs and fens so that the larval mosquitoes can be destroyed (see area 4 in the sidebar "Exploring the Glitchegumee Swamp"). The trip from where the PCs encounter the Bog Monster to the breeder-bogs will take 3-12 hours. If a random encounter occurs during this time, the Bog Monster will help the PCs to the best of its ability, unless the encounter is with the will o'wisp, whom the Bog Monster will not fight.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs destroy the threat of the mosquitoes, award a story bonus of 2,000 XP, to be split among all the PCs. If the PCs manage to convince the Bog Monster to help them destroy the mosquitoes, award a bonus of 6,000 XP for teaching the Bog Monster a valuable lesson. The Bog Monster of the Glitchegumee will be much more mature from now on. Note that the experience-point award for destroying the Bog Monster is 3,000 XP. When awarding experience points for this adventure, make liberal use of the optional experience-point award scheme on page 48 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* especially the "roleplays his character well," and "has a clever idea" categories.

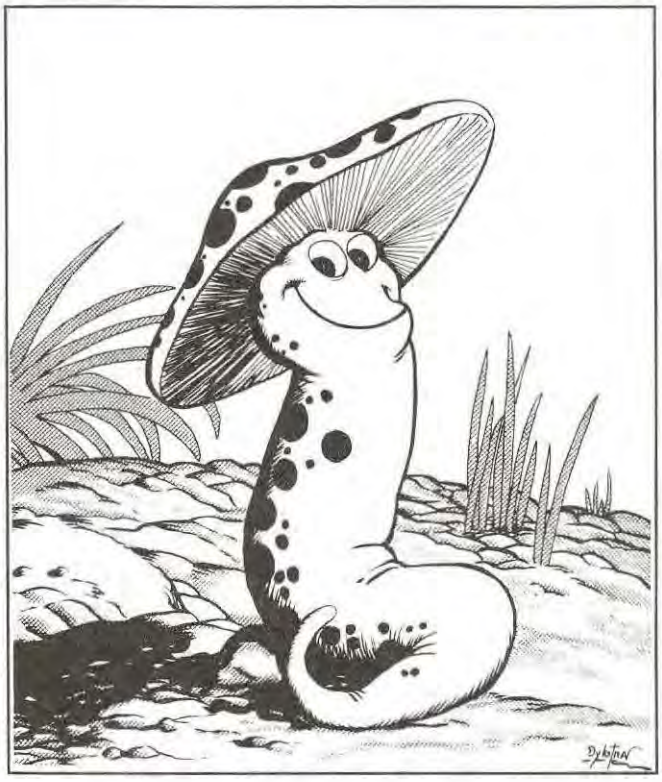
Even if the PCs succeed in destroying the mosquitoes, it will take several weeks before creatures return to the swamp, and years before the swamp ecology returns to normal. The Bog Monster will be very lonely until it gets some new friends to play with. What will the PCs do with the moping, lonely Bog Monster until some of the other swamp creatures return to their homes in the Glitchegumee Swamp? The PCs can either baby-sit it for a few weeks, or perhaps they can take the Bog Monster to Katan's hut, where it can play and sing with its friends, the campestris. Of course, Katan may not be too thrilled about babysitting a huge mound of childlike vegetation. The PCs will have to resolve this problem to the best of their ability. If the solution has a spark of genius (or is funny), award a bonus of 100-200 XP, to be split among the PCs.

This adventure leaves many unanswered questions for the DM to explore. Some of them may even lead to further adventures involving Katan and the Glitchegumee Swamp. There may be more artifacts from the man-orc battle out in the fens, mires, and stagnant pools of the swamp—leftover Ticking Timebombs of Trouble (so to speak). Did any of the warriors from that long-ago battle get turned into undead? Will Katan have any more trouble from his mysterious enemies in Volkrad? Will the PCs come back to the Glitchegumee and try to do away with the will o'wisp? Just how many lives does Hlaupa the cat have left? And, most important of all, will the campestris ever learn to sing on key?

Several previously published DUNGEON® adventures can easily be modified to take place in and around the Glitchegumee Swamp. For example: Kingdom in the Swamp (issue #4) and The Rotting Willow (issue #5). Ω

Campestri

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Saltwater swamp
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day, but inactive in bright sunlight
DIET:	Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (3-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	4d6 per herd
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spores, sound imitation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Surprised only on a 1-2
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T-S (3″ per hp)
MORALE:	Unsteady (6-7)
XP VALUE:	65



Campestris resemble myconids (see MC2) without arms and have a stronger resemblance to mushrooms than their more highly evolved cousins. Campestris are happy-go-lucky creatures with few cares or worries. The mushroom creatures are a little smarter than a domestic cat, just smart enough to have a warped sense of humor and some rudimentary powers of reason. Each "herd" of mushrooms also has a collective intelligence equal to about 6-7 on the intelligence scale. A druid character or one with proficiency in herbalism may have heard of the dancing mushrooms in old legends, but the PCs should not have any specific information about campestri habits and abilities.

Campestris vary widely in color, from white to tan to dark brown, but they always have red or purple caps and speckles. They move by expanding and contracting their rootballs.

Combat: Once per day, each campestri can release a cloud of spores that acts as a *slow* spell on all creatures within a 10′ radius. The effect lasts for 1d4 +4 rounds (save vs. spells for half duration). Campestris are very sensitive to sound and vibrations, and thus are surprised on only a roll of 1-2.

Campestris can butt creatures at a high rate of speed for a single point of damage, but they use this attack mainly as a distraction. They will also swarm spell-casters this way to prevent spell-casting.

Habitat/Society: The mushroom creatures are captivated by any sort of singing, even incredibly bad singing. If anyone sings or plays an instrument, the campestris will happily sing along. The mushrooms can easily imitate both words and music. Once they have run through a song or piece of music three or four times, they remember it, although they have a tendency to mix and match parts of different tunes. The campestris will dance all around whoever is singing to them, enjoying themselves immensely. The DM should be able to get a laugh out of this, too. If one of the PCs sings a song to the campestris, sing it back with the words warped a little.

Example: Suppose a PC bard sings, "Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow," which is one of the campestris' all-time favorite songs. In response, the campestris madly caper around the PCs while singing, "Murray hada weedleam, hoose fleas was wideasno!" (the DM should repeat the lyrics in an obnoxiously nasal falsetto, twisting them in a new way each time, until he gets tired or the players start to throw things).

If the player of a bard PC puts up with the campestris' sometimes annoying habits and teaches them to sing on key (a very patient bard might even be able to get them to sing and dance like a chorus line), award a bonus of 150 XP to the PC for role-playing. If the player does an exceptionally good job (if everyone at the gaming session laughs), the PC deserves 200-300 XP for role-playing. In order to earn this bonus, the player must actually sing the song his character wants to teach the campestris. Player talent does not count here, only that the player was willing to sing. The DM should use his judgment to determine when the PC bard has put enough effort into teaching the campestris to sing.

Ecology: Campestris are very useful creatures to have around, if you happen to live in an area with salty soil. The mushroom creatures "eat" salty soil, filter out the salt, and excrete a slippery paste of purified soil (stripped of things nourishing to fungus, of course).

Eating salt also serves as a defense mechanism, because it makes campestries taste as salty as caviar. Bullywugs consider them a delicacy, but most other intelligent creatures avoid them.

DEADLY TREASURE

Continued from page 25

the pewter mug (10 gp). However, the spoon beside the mug is actually a *Murlynd's spoon.* Both the spoon and mug are encrusted with dried gruel from Zathis's last meal.

The unicorn head is a trophy from Zathis's younger years. He came upon the beast in a forest and slew it before he realized what it was. The wizard was so impressed with the creature's beauty that he brought its head here to adorn his tomb.

The drapes on the north wall partially conceal a 30′ × 10′ storage area. Inside are numerous barrels, bins, crates, and containers of all sorts that store Zathis's supply of material components. There are enough components here to cast any given mage spell 1-3 times. The encumbrance of all these spell components is 200 lbs. Also stored here is a small pouch hanging from a spike on the wall. Inside is Zathis's store of emergency funds: 20 100-gp gems, 10 500-gp gems, and five 1,000-gp gems (base values). None of the items in this storeroom are magical.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the tomb has been cleared out, there may still be a few loose ends. Any PCs lost on other planes should be given a reasonable chance to escape, though this is a process that could span several adventures. The evil priest Dranloc will certainly wish to run into the PCs again, most likely with a small army behind him. And, with 30,000 gp worth of gems, he can certainly afford to hire whatever help he thinks he needs.

If the PCs restore Sir Ayvers, they gain a 3,000 XP bonus. Sir Ayvers may decide to repay his rescuers by serving the heroes for some time, improving their moral fiber, and keeping them on the path of righteousness.

If the PCs escape from Zarrp, the arcanaloth is still obligated to hunt them down and destroy them before he is freed of his debt. A particularly brave and capable party may even wish to track down Zarrp to his red-iron fortress in Gehenna and recover Zathis's spell books. The perils and rewards of such an undertaking are left entirely to the DM.

If the PCs fail, the people of Greenbarrow are convinced the tomb is haunted and continue to warn others away. If they succeed in overcoming the traps and creatures of the tomb, the PCs should gain a 30,000 XP story award, to be split among the party members. The tomb itself remains, abandoned until some monster decides to make it a home. Ω

THE WELL OF LORD BARCUS

Continued from page 27

serpentine owl *figurine of wondrous power,* a rusty dagger, a bronze helm, three silver rings worth 30 gp each, a gold ring worth 200 gp, an ordinary ring with "Ring of Warmth" written on it in elvish script, and three glass marbles. PCs will not be cursed if they take these items. Only PCs who take items from the well will be cursed.

Marlinus uses his condition as a haunt to try to free himself from his curse by possessing a PC and returning his loot to the well. If Marlinus manages to possess a body and return all the loot to the well, or if somebody does it for him, the curse is lifted. Marlinus goes on to his reward (whatever that may be) with an audible sigh of relief.

Marlinus's surviving personal items include belt buckles and some bits of clothing, a *dagger +1/+2 vs. sea creatures* sheathed in his belt, a *necklace of adaptation* around his skeletal throat, a *ring of sustenance* on a bony finger, and two 200-gp rubies hidden in his rotted boots.

Marlinus (haunt): INT non; AL CN; AC 0/as victim; MV 6/as victim; HD 5/as victim; hp 30/as victim; THAC0 15; #AT 1/1, as 5-HD monster; Dmg Dexterity drain/by weapon type; SA possession/as victim; SD struck only by silver or magical weapons, or by fire; weapons cause only 1 hp damage (plus magical bonuses, if any); normal fire causes 1 hp damage per round/as victim; SZ M; ML 16; XP 2,000; MC2.

After sunset, Marlinus approaches the camp and attempts to possess the PC with the lowest Dexterity. If blocked, he will try the PC with the second lowest Dexterity. If "killed" in his noncorporeal form, Marlinus fades away but will re-form in one week. Marlinus must stay within 60 yards of the shrine.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs kill Marlinus's haunt without returning the loot to the well, they will have missed the main point of this adventure. The experience award should be one-half or one-quarter of the possible total. If they return Marlinus's loot to the well, the full award is recommended.

If PCs steal from the well, they will be affected by the well's *curse of ill luck* (penalty of 2 to all rolls). The DM could drop hints like bad dreams, fortune tellers, or omen readings to communicate the cause of the curse if necessary.

Further adventures could arise as the party tries to remove the well's curse from one of their members, or to learn to deal with the strange benefits bestowed by the well.

Roger Baker says he got the idea for this encounter from a song he heard on the radio. "It just proves that interesting adventures can be found anywhere." Ω

A WAY WITH WORDS

Continued from page 35

The Last Word

Once the PCs have retrieved the book of poetry from the kobolds, it should be relatively simple for them to get back to Rhiannon's home or to Edgewater.

If the PCs allow Rhiannon to copy some of the poems, she will be so happy that she begins crying. The bard also gives the PCs the gold she promised them.

Harfur will be exceptionally pleased if the book is returned. He immediately gives the PCs their gold and garnets, and he invites them to a celebratory tea party and poetry reading. He will not be too disappointed if the PCs decline his offer, but the party will hear him mumble something under his breath about "the cultural bereavement of today's adventurers." Ω

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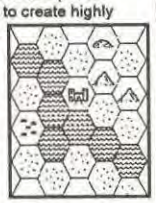

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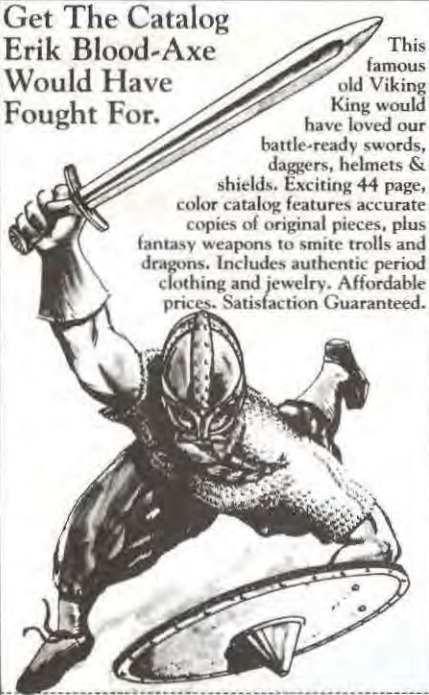

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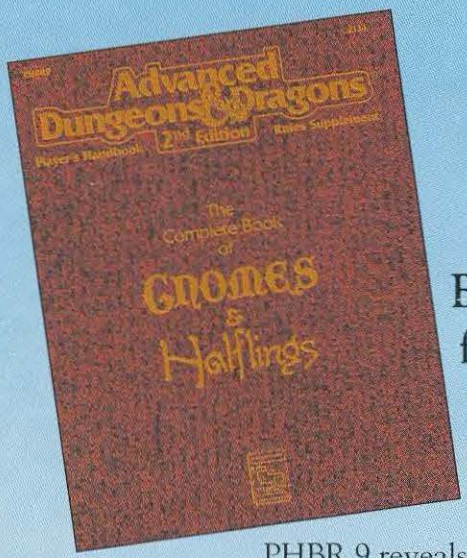

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